# SOME ACCOUNT

OF

# MYSELF.

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BY

*CHARLES EARL OF ERPINGHAM,*

&c. &c. &c.

IN

**Four Volumes.**

"It is my intention to represent Characters such as they are in life; but Heaven forbid that I should pourtray any person in particular."— LE SAGE.

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## CHAP. I.

*MY MOTIVES FOR WRITING.*

THE chief aim of every writer must inevitably be devoted to amusement or instruction.—Perhaps, the publications most beneficial to mankind, are those in which both are combined.—Dry instruction can afford interest only to the plodding student, or to those who have arrived at a period of life, when instruc-

tion is become almost useless. Few are willing to acknowledge their inferiority even to themselves; — improvement of the good qualities of the head and heart can, therefore, only be effected by the force of example; and as an individual is seldom fortunate enough to witness any great portion of the realities, he must be contented with the resemblances, as they are occasionally pourtrayed to the life, in the works of those who have endeavoured to analyze the thoughts and actions of themselves, or of other people.

"Histories," says some writer or other, for I shall not trouble myself with the names of authors, or with the dates of events,—" histories are romances which we do believe, and romances are histories which we do not believe." It is, therefore, no very extraordinary stretch of the imagination to apply them equally to the purposes of example. Men in all ages have been men, and whether

they have lived in the reign of the Conqueror, or in that of George the Third, the same passions have pervaded the human race; the same good and evil have been observable.—The Clodius of Rome exists in ———, and the Messalina in ———.

I have just mentioned that I shall not trouble myself with dates or names; they are in reality of little importance: the want of date, although it may impeach the veracity of an occurrence in the confined view of a technical genealogist, does not destroy it with those who seek for information in the book of nature. Nor does the withholding a name prove an intention on the part of a writer to convert to his own use the property of another. In the following pages, where my memory, on which alone I depend, enables me to illustrate my thoughts, by passages from other writers, I shall not scruple to avail myself of such assistance; but at the same

time, I shall, as far as lies in my power, tell the reader whenever I resort to the use of it. But it will unavoidably happen at times, that ideas which I may imagine to be my own, may have emanated from other brains; in that case I have only to observe with Bayes in the Rehearsal that "Shakespeare and myself have hit upon the same thought."

It was complained of the author I have last mentioned, that his kings were not sufficiently royal, nor his Romans sufficiently Roman. One of his commentators, and perhaps the best, (but I make no claim to critical sagacity,) observes in his defence, that he neither thought of Romans nor kings, but only of *men*—"He added drunkenness to the vices of the Danish Usurper, in order to make him appear more odious, and wanting a buffoon, he went to the senate house, for that which the senate would certainly have afforded him."—In the course of the following pages,

the reader will perhaps meet with personages whose actions as little accord with their situation in life, as drunkenness with royalty, or buffoonery with senatorial dignity. He may be introduced to a peer of the *fancy*, or perchance to a political drover, and find "some made critics nature meant but fools." They are still men, and it is with mankind, (womankind in all cases understood), that my life has been passed —a burden to myself,—to none a blessing, and to many a curse.

In presenting to the world the memoirs of a man distinguished by no brilliant actions, nor remarkable for any acquirements that can separate him from the herd of bipeds, who fill up the blanks of society, and who occupy the intermediate space between the positive and the negative; it is necessary, in order to excite even a moderate degree of interest, that this deficiency in striking events should have a

counterpoise of some description or other. This, in the opinion of those who are satisfied with taking the world as they find it, may in some measure be supplied from the occurrences which I have to relate of myself and of others, with whom chance or destiny, which ever the reader pleases, has connected me. These occurrences have happened within the sphere of those forming, in my apprehension, the great bulk of society; namely, the gay and thoughtless in youth, the pedantic and empty in maturity, and the peevish and fretful in the decline of life. I have long passed my grand climacteric;—in the course of nature my days must soon close;—reading fatigues me;—friends I have none;—I have unwillingly, and without an intention to do wrong, been the cause of misery to many;—the bitterness of my reflections are not alleviated by the recollection of a single good action;—I have deserted the world,

and am deservedly deserted by it;—time hangs heavy upon my hands;—the demon of listlessness is hovering round my easy chair, if easy it can be called, when its occupier is at variance with himself, and with every body about him. To employ my vacant hours and to relieve myself from the dull monotony of watching the clock, or the weather, I have resorted to the pen, certain of present amusement, but doubtful whether that instability which has accompanied me through life, will permit me to persevere in an occupation to which I have been wholly unaccustomed, until I have completed my task of laying before the rising generation such an account of my feelings and conduct, as may prove a beacon to headstrong youth, and to obstinate age.

In the eyes of the law, I have been guilty of no infringement upon the criminal code. In the eyes of humanity

my sins are manifold, and against conscience my transgressions are innumerable. As far as I am enabled, the picture I shall draw of what I am, and what I have been, shall be a correct likeness; but it is possible that I may deceive myself, and that my pen may, unknown to me, gloss over follies which I am now above concealing. My object is to delineate the character and actions of a man, whose heart and person nature had cast in her kindest mould, but whose happiness, comforts and prospects have been invariably blasted, by a rash dependence upon first impressions, and who imbibed in early life an intolerable pride, which prevented him from seeking or giving explanations, even on the most tender points. Who, profusely gifted by fortune, passed through the vale of life without one cheering ray of friendship. Who might have ranked among the happiest of the happy, but whose follies

and early prejudices have classed him among those to whom existence is intolerable.

A considerable time elapsed between my determination to write, and the commencement of my work, before I could make up my mind as to the best method of compiling my memoirs. Every species of writing appeared to me to possess its peculiar advantages. The epistolary above every other kind seemed calculated to enable the reader to enter, as it were, into the very soul of the writer; but I had no friend to whom I could address myself, even in imagination, and I felt aware of the necessity of *supposing* that the party to whom the letters are ostensibly addressed should actually feel an interest in what concerns the writer. Besides it had often struck me that the long winded letters which we are to believe have passed between the characters in our best epistolary novels, give to the

personages an air of trifling. Minutiæ may interest in conversation, and even in narrative writing; but it is ridiculous to suppose that sensible beings would permit the most trivial incidents to occupy the mind, first in the action, and then in the relation to the *Fides Achates*. There is also, another defect: the interest excited by the combination is often weakened, if not destroyed by the separate relation which the parties have to make of their respective shares in the transactions.

The advantages of the narrative style in describing passing events are undoubted. The writer, who adopts the use of the third person, assumes the privilege of ubiquity. He can speak for every person, and can account for every action; but it is next to impossible to separate the author from the speaker; the same impressions, and the same turn of thought, will pervade the mind of both. Hence the histo

rian and the writer of another's life, identify themselves and their opinions with their subjects. The puritanical memorialists of Cromwell have handed down to posterity an account of his "seeking the Lord," at the same moment that his intimate companions well knew, that he was only seeking the corkscrew.

Much awkwardness attends biography where an uninterested person stands forth as the writer, particularly if the subject of his work be not contemporaneous with himself. If he indulge in a comprehensive view, he must neglect the fore ground to give effect to the distant landscape. He is apt to consider himself as called upon, in some measure, to lay open the secret springs of his hero's actions, and to unveil the inmost recesses of the heart. This, even with an intimate acquaintance with the person, can rarely be accomplished: dependence on the wri-

ter, then, must necessarily be reduced to the dry detail of facts, and the most ingenious surmises must be levelled to the order of distant probabilities. To account for his motives, the hero is often endowed with virtues he never contemplated, and vices he never possessed. The effects of accident are frequently attributed to abstruse design, and the result of elaborate intention degraded to an union with chance.

Here the recorder of his own thoughts and actions, has the manifest advantage of drawing his knowledge from the fountain head. He may, it is true, deceive himself in small particulars, such as mistaking profusion for generosity, pride for conscious dignity, and avarice for œconomy. He may fancy that he is charitable when he is only ostentatious, and that he is following the dictates of sense when he is driven by the impulse of folly. But these are ble-

mishes of the slighter order; he can never disguise from himself the consciousness of a good or of a bad action; nor can he conceal from his own mind the purity or the impurity of the feelings by which he was actuated. He may, perhaps, at times succeed in lulling his conscience, but the secret monitor will not be long silenced. It is impossible to prevent his becoming an egotist, for it is his business to be one. He has to deliver a plain unvarnished tale of the scenes and occurrences in which he has been engaged, and of the persons with whom he has been connected. In his delineations of mankind, he may, perhaps, occasionally stumble upon "*humours*," which are neither more nor less, than the same passions under different disguises. The Bobadil of the present day does not pride himself on exposing a remnant of tobacco, and declaring it to be all that remains of a "pound, since yesterday was a

week, as I am a gentleman and a soldier;" but he may be daily seen stalking the streets, with whiskers equally tremendous, and looks equally terrific; and if a cane were laid across his shoulders he would be equally "planet struck." At all events the self biographer cannot well avoid explaining the reasons for his conduct as he proceeds: thus answering the noblest aim of biography, the furnishing an insight into the human heart.

I have seriously reflected whether I possessed sufficient command over myself, to search into the inmost recesses of my own breast; whether I could bear the recalling of painful recollections without dismay, and chearful ones without regret; and whether my mind could endure the recital, with my own hand, of follies which distress me, and vices which appal me. But my breast is steeled; and my frame has long ceased to vibrate either with lively pleasure, or

with acute pain. Launched into the world with every prospect of comfort and happiness, and with the means of procuring every indulgence which fancy or caprice could desire, the past has been miserable, the present is intolerable, and the future on this side the grave, is hopeless.

Previous, however, to commencing the "account of myself," I shall look back at what I have already written, and pause for a few moments to recollect myself.

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## CHAP. II.

*BIRTH, PARENTAGE AND EDUCATION.*

AS few, if any, are allowed the privilege of choosing their own parents, I was obliged to take up with my lot as I found it. My father had derived a very considerable property from his ancestors, with the name of Charles Somers Monkton, and the titles of Earl of Erpingham, Viscount Winterbourne, and Baron Cressy of Wickworth. My mother was the only daughter and heiress of Eldridge Bingwood, Esq. of Bingwood Abbey, in the County of Derby; she was also the divorced wife of the fourth Duke of Thetford. It is foreign to my purpose to speak of things which do not relate personally

to myself; I shall therefore only remark that my father, who was a man of *honour* and gallantry, notwithstanding he had debauched the wife of his *friend*, paid the Duke the sum of fifteen thousand pounds, which a jury considered to be an adequate compensation for the alleged breach upon his Grace's peace of mind. My father, who was fortunately a bachelor, made the Duchess every reparation, and healed the wounds which he had been the means of inflicting on her reputation, as far as lay in his power.

My mother, as I have been led to believe, was of that silent and reserved disposition, which people in general convey to the comprehension of others under the appellation of sullenness. Those who had been acquainted with her in her early years, and before her union with his Grace, have often assured me that she was *then* the very reverse of what I have now stated.

Her marriage with the Duke was entirely against her consent, and perhaps occasioned that change in her temperament. Her affections had been previously engaged, and she was led to the altar, an unwilling sacrifice at the shrine of grandeur. Indeed, from the little I have heard or seen of his Grace, it was, in my opinion, utterly impossible, that a sensible woman which my mother certainly was, should have felt towards him either esteem or regard. My father, gay and insinuating, appeared to her, I suppose, a pleasanter companion than a brutish tyrannical husband. Neglect on the part of the Duke, and opportunity on the part of my father, led to a result which frequently occurs in high life, to the no small gratification of the gentlemen of the long robe.

In my father's case, matters, were more favourable than generally happens, for a large fortune was settled on

my mother for her sole use. *Honour* and the dread that the finger of scorn should be held up against him, reluctantly compelled the Duke to part from his wife. My father took her and the money together and, adding, according to her father's will, her maiden name to his title, adopted the signature of Bingwood Erpingham.

To make some amends for my mother's taciturnity and sullenness, my father was one of the most passionate men in existence; but his passion was most commonly of a transient nature, and vented itself in clamorous verbiage. He was hasty and thoughtless in committing an injury, and generally uneasy until he had afforded redress. He was, however, quick in resentment, and unforgiving when thoroughly offended. The bad points in his character were partially counterbalanced by some excellent qualities; his temper was naturally open and generous, and with a

companion who would have considered it a duty to study his disposition and to humour his failings, he might have made an exemplary husband, and might probably have been an ornament to society. Of his talents, I can say but little, but I am inclined to think that, if any thing, they were rather on the uppermost side of mediocrity.

But whether it was the losing herself in her own estimation, or whether the uncomfortable life she led with the Duke, had rendered her silent disposition habitual to her, I cannot pretend to decide; at all events, I believe, it would have been difficult to have found a couple in the world more completely burdensome to each other. Their tempers were thoroughly discordant; in their pursuits they had no inclination in common between them; and I imagine that the only interchange of speech consisted in mutual reproaches. My mother, with good reason, chose to live

in retirement. My father, although his thoughts were directed to the gay world, voluntarily acquiesced in order to preserve appearances. Things continued some years in this state, when the same hour which brought me into the world, took my mother out of it.

For this information respecting my family, I am indebted to the Reverend Edward Perceval, who was my mother's resident chaplain at the time of her marriage with my father, and who was subsequently appointed my tutor. The truth of it I cannot in the least doubt; for I unfortunately inherited with the Bingwood estates the reserved disposition of my mother, and with the title and estates of Erpingham, the hasty temperament of my father. It was the union of these two opposite qualities which I imagine produced a third,—an invincible objection to acknowledge myself in error, joined with a fixed determination, as I have before observed, of

avoiding explanation whenever I had taken offence.

With a mind thus constituted, and with an education conducted upon the principle of unlimited indulgence, it could not be a matter of wonder that I should pass through life without deriving any rational enjoyment from the profuse gifts of fortune; and that after running a career of folly and dissipation, I should be be left, towards the close of life, a plague to myself and to every one about me.

The ample fortune of my maternal grandfather, which had been laboriously accumulated in trade, devolved immediately upon myself, but with a strict entail upon the male line to the total exclusion of the female branches. The reasons for this, as my grandfather had left an only daughter, I could never exactly comprehend. Probably, like many other fathers, similarly circumstanced, he had found no small difficul-

ty in the disposal of an heiress to his satisfaction. In the event of my decease without a son, the property was consigned to some distant relations, who, either out of affection for me or my fortune, were constantly making the most tender enquiries into the state of my health. I remember, in my childhood, when they have called to visit me, overhearing their calculations upon the probabilities of the hooping-cough, the measles, the small-pox, as well as other little incidental mishaps, removing the fatal obstacle which stood between them and their hopes. A putrid fever once diffused a universal joy amongst them: "the poor child was at his last gasp, he should not be tortured with swallowing trash that could be of no service to him." They were, perhaps, my best friends after all, for I recovered; which might not have been the case if I had been left to the persecution of the medical attendants. Like a cat, I might pro-

bably have been gifted with nine lives. Certain it is, however, that in defiance of all prognostics, my health and strength increased with my years, and upon my discovering no inclination for fox-hunting, and seeming to be somewhat careful of my neck, my kind hearted friends considered me as an incorrigible blockhead, who had not spirit enough to run into danger.

My father looked upon me not only as provided for, but as one who had robbed him of no small portion of his income, for my mother had permitted him to consider her fortune as his own. But at her death, the trustees appointed under the will of my grandfather, took the management of the estates into their own hands. My father generously threw me into the bargain, for as there was now nothing to prevent his returning to his former pursuits, he absolved himself from all further trouble as far as I was concerned. He took his leave

of me and rushed into the pleasures of the metropolis, where dissipation became the order of the day.

My education was entirely committed to the superintendance of my tutor Mr. Perceval, who, in addition to his office of "bear leader," was raised to the rank of deputy guardian. He had early disgusted me, and could never afterwards regain my confidence; but as he obsequiously acted in any way I directed, anticipated my wishes as far as lay in his power, and left me to pursue my own inclination in every respect, I did not murmur at his attendance upon me, although he never experienced any other treatment besides cold neglect. With no one to respect, and no one to feel an interest in pleasing, it is not surprising that I did not make any extraordinary progress in my studies: in fact, study only took its turn when my mind was weary of every thing else. If I thought at all

it was to look forward to the full enjoyment of my fortune; nothing but the complete possession could satisfy me; and as I had been placed out of the reach of temptation, my present wants were few in number and small in amount.

My mother, for reasons best known to herself, and contrary to the wishes of my father, had thought proper to fix her residence at Bingwood in preference to Erpingham. As I chanced to be born there, there I was suffered to remain; and although the heir to such immense wealth, previous to my sixteenth year, I had scarcely wandered from my own domain. With the neighbouring families my mother had refused to hold the slightest intercourse; her son therefore was suffered to remain unknowing and unknown. By my father, except by the half yearly letters of Perceval, I was entirely forgotten, until his necessities reminded him that

I was still in existence. About the time that I had attained my sixteenth year, my father, for the first time expressed a wish to see me, not from any motive of affection, but from necessity. His extravagant expenditure had so embarrassed his circumstances, as to make him desirous to ascertain the probability of his obtaining my assistance in releasing him from his difficulties, on my completing my twenty-first year, by docking the entail of part of the family estates.

My father *then* visited Bingwood Abbey, after an absence of nearly sixteen years, bringing with him two of his principal creditors, with a view of sounding my inclinations. I was easily persuaded into the propriety of meeting my father's wishes by promoting the payment of his debts. As nothing more could then be done I was soon left to my former pursuits; but I had stipulated for being sent to college immediately. The

expences of a college residence being to be defrayed from my own fortune, without in the slightest degree touching upon my father's, he readily acquiesced, and, still under the care of Perceval, who was little more than a useful tool, I was entered at ——— college in Oxford.

The exploits of boys, who fancy themselves to be men, afford little or nothing worth recording. I have no doubt that I was as empty and conceited as the rest, but as it was my *whole* fortune that occupied my mind, I took no pains whatever to forestall it; and that it might burst upon me at once, I took care not to exceed my regular allowance, which, by the bye, was not so liberal as it ought to have been. But one of my trustees was a banker and the other a lawyer. The banker connived at the multiplication of law proceedings in return for an enormous balance which was always deposited in his

hands, and which he retained with the utmost pertinacity, to the exclusion of the comforts and appearance corresponding to my rank.

I left the University about four months before I came of age. My father then summoned me to London to forward his own views. But as I am now launching into what is generally denominated *life*, I shall make my entrance into London in a fresh chapter.



## CHAP. III.

*FRIENDSHIP.*

ON my arrival in the metropolis I found myself transported into a new world. To a youthful and ardent mind, brought up in the shades of retirement, and whose excursions had never extended beyond the verge of a college, the bustle of a capital must necessarily impart the most delightful sensations. That vacancy which is occasioned by quitting familiar scenes, is speedily filled by continued novelty, before the eye has long viewed the passing crowds engaged in the active employments of life. The interval which elapses between the commencement of enjoyment

and the approach of satiety, is perhaps the most gratifying which the mind can experience.

The prospect of a speedy payment served to exhilarate those to whom my father was indebted, and induced them to advance a further supply, which enabled him to receive his son in a style becoming his expectations. The town mansion once more assumed a splendid appearance; the rooms, which by successive executions had been relieved from their gaudy trappings, were again decorated with flimsy finery, chosen more for its dazzling quality than its substantiality. Every thing that could gratify and catch the attention of youth was placed before my eyes and within my reach; every endeavour was made to banish thought from my breast, and to keep me in a state of continued pleasure. For a time I was in an imaginary paradise, and

was tempted to believe that my joys were of a lasting nature. I heard of little else but the supreme felicity attending the possession of a large fortune, together with the gratification to be derived from the uncontrolled power of spending it as fancy should dictate. No one could have a right to blame my profusion if I wasted it, and no one could accuse me of parsimony if I chose to preserve it. Happy! happy independence. But in all this there was nothing new: every heir, from Noah downwards has, I apprehend, met with a similar reception, whenever his signature has been essential in the docking of an entail. The necessities of the Earl of Erpingham called for the assistance of his son the Lord Viscount Winterbourne, and the touch of Lord Viscount Winterbourne was allowed to be magical. His hand to the parchment, like the blow upon the rock, could make that which was most want-

ed flow in abundance, and Lord Viscount Winterbourne, like the Jewish lawgiver was only estimated by his power of complying with the demands of others.

Hitherto my days had glided on in an unvaried current, differing only as to the situation in which I drank the cup of pleasure, but as it was necessary that I should not only have been born, but actually trained to manhood, before I could take possession of my property, it was as necessary that I should so inform the reader, particularly if he happens to be one of those who are sparing in the employment of their powers of ratiocination; he might otherwise have supposed, that Minerva-like, I started full grown from my father's brain. God knows, although my father might pass muster in the common herd of mortals, he had few qualifications that would entitle him to a seat in Olympus.

It was determined by those whose reign was about to be at an end, that my attaining the age of maturity and independence should be celebrated at Bingwood Abbey, with a strict adherence to the ceremonials prescribed by the admirers of true old English hospitality. To this plan I had no other objection than leaving the metropolis, for the amusements and allurements of which I had began to acquire a considerable relish, that was rather increasing than diminishing. Reflecting however within myself, that it would be the last time that I should have to submit to the control of either my father or my trustees, I consented with the best grace I could assume. I was induced to do so the more readily as I plainly perceived that my lawyer trustee, who was an attorney of very extensive practice and high reputation, and of brutality of manners and snarling ill-nature equal to his practice, had made up his mind to the mode of proceeding.

Mr. Bearblock, the lawyer in question, had obtained a high character for honesty by an assumed bluntness, which intimidated those for whom he was concerned from inspecting their own affairs; he therefore cheated with impunity and without suspicion. He had contrived to keep within himself the management of my affairs, the banker's balance excepted; it was in his power, therefore, to have thwarted and vexed me with endless litigation had I ventured in this instance to have disobliged him; and I am satisfied that had I roused the spirit of discontent within him, he would have annoyed me to the utmost of his power. . .

Another thing that reconciled me to a temporary banishment from the gaieties of the metropolis, was the promise of being accompanied by a young man who had suddenly become an extraordinary favourite with my father. He had insensibly wound himself into

my confidence, and I thought nothing right which was not sanctioned by the exquisite taste and correct judgment of Charles Villiers.

My new friend and factotum: Charles Villiers, was one of those characters frequently to be met with in the higher circles, to which they are necessary appendages. Sprung from the lord knows who, come from the lord knows where, and received into society the lord knows why, he had made his way on a familiar footing into the houses of the principal nobility and gentry. Without possessing any visible means of existence, he supported the appearance of a gentleman, and was in all companies treated as such. He neither possessed brilliant talents, nor any of the fashionable accomplishments, and I can describe him in no other way than by saying that he had a person by no means disagreeable, which was set off to the best advantage by the aid

of dress; that he was a useful "walk-in gentleman" in filling an assembly, and setting off the more prominent characters; that he had a bow and a cringe for every one proportioned in its profoundness to the rank of the party; that he was an agreeable and indefatigable listener to the harangues and dissertations of others, however tedious, monotonous, or unmeaning; and that the few words he uttered were judiciously selected to the advancement of his own interest, for they chiefly consisted of compliments to the understanding and abilities of both the present and the absent.

I speak of him as I found him in the sequel. At the first acquaintance I considered him as a man of solid understanding, from whom I might derive the greatest advantage in my outset in life. I felt conscious of my want of experience, which I thought it was in his power to remedy. By his know-

ledge of the world, I intended to frame my conduct and behaviour; he would, I conceived, be able to guard me against those snares which, in my moments of wisdom, I imagined would be spread out in every direction to entrap me; and he would put me in the way of enjoying pleasure with the least possible portion of alloy.

My partiality for him I have no doubt was in great measure occasioned, perhaps entirely so, by overhearing him observe to Lady Selina Dervent, to whom he was addressing his discourse, while her ladyship was recovering her breath, which she had just exhausted in talking, that "Lord Winterbourne was, without exception, one of the most sensible and agreeable young men he had ever had the honour of conversing with, and that he plainly "foresaw that his lordship would prove one of the brightest ornaments to his age and country." Every per-

son at some period or other of his life has felt that kind of inward joy which is diffused by the countenance which *disinterested* observers afford to self-complacency in cases like the present. The back of Villiers was turned towards me, and I did not think it possible that he could be aware of my being within the sound of his voice. Lady Selina had recovered her wind by the time Villiers had made an end of his eulogy, and immediately gave a new turn to the conversation. I could never, therefore, exactly find out whether her ladyship coincided with him in the high sense which he seemed to entertain of my extraordinary merits.

Some poet or other observes that "All men think all men mortal but themselves;" in like manner there are few among my readers who have not the highest opinion of their own abilities, and who do not feel the highest gratification at a compli-

ment being paid to their understanding. It is in this way that a vain man is easily led to deceive himself, although he may easily detect an imposition which any one may attempt to practise upon him. With his own personal charms every one is satisfied, even those to whom nature has been most niggardly in the distribution of beauty. The glass affords the power of drawing a comparison between self, the standard of perfection and the rest of the world. "I would not be so tall as that fellow for the universe," said a Lilliputian, who was vainly endeavouring to lift his umbrella over the head of an inhabitant of Brobdingnag. "What a miserable thing to be no higher than a curb stone," retorted he of Brobdingnag with a look of contempt, as the edge of the umbrella touched his nose. "I know," said an hero of ugliness, "that my features are not what may be termed

strictly regular, but there is a certain something,—an air of expression, a *je ne sçai quoi*, which renders me altogether irrestible."

These candidates for the ugly club are daily to be met with: I remember a dowager on the wrong side of sixty, who might have passed, for the daughter of Goliath, and the sister of the Irish giant, and who with a coarse brown face, seamed with the small pox, which had demolished the eyebrows and eyelashes,—with only one tooth which started horizontally from the upper gum, as well as some other appearances and peculiarities that altogether proclaimed her being more nearly allied to Mars than to Venus, or to Erynnis than either,—this *fair* damsel had attracted the observation of one of her grand-daughters, by the profusion of party coloured ribbons and gauzes, with which she had decorated her lovely person; the young lady modestly ob-

served that for her part she admired her grand mamma most in her morning dress. "Jealousy, child!" retorted the antiquated dame, "besides when one's naturally showy a little sets one off."

By a general invitation to my father's house, I gave to Villers every opportunity that he could desire of acquiring an influence over my mind, and actions. In a few weeks that influence became unbounded in its extent, and I was merely a puppet of which he moved the wires. "Such a proceeding is beneath a man of your sense;"—"a man of your highly cultivated understanding should accustom himself to view every thing in its true light, stripped of the covering which deceives the silly part of mankind."—"It is not every one who is capable of separating the dross from the metal: it is therefore proper for those who like yourself are eminently gifted with the powers of percep-

tion, to hold out an example of prudence and consistency." These and other observations of a similar tendency, were so often reiterated in my ears, that I was at last thoroughly satisfied with my own mental qualifications, and of course tamely submitted to be made a fool in every thing.

A thorough knowledge of the town and its ways, could not fail of rendering Villiers a pleasant acquisition to one desirous of experiencing its pleasures, and enjoying its luxuries. A perfect master in the art of dissimulation, and an adept in the science of persuasion, Villiers well knew how to keep my passions constantly upon the alert. They were apparently gratified by his means, and by them only. He hung about me to the absolute exclusion of a young man of fortune's prime minister, his *Valet de chambre.* It was in vain my *gentleman* urged the dignity of his post, and that he alone should be en-

trusted with commissions of a delicate natur ; I w s inflexible, for "it was improper to repose confidence in domest cs, who o.ly seek their master's secrets to betray them, or to get them in their power."

Villiers kindly undertook to direct my pleasures, and also told me when I ought to be pleased, and when a pursuit was "beneath my dignity." He procured me the means of enjoying such gratifications as corresponded "with my rank," and what was still kinder, when it met his approbation he partook of the enjoyment.

Who could do too much for such a valued and valuable friend? and what recompence could be deemed adequate for such important services? Indeed, he was become absolutely necessary to my existence, for in his absence, which was but seldom the case, I frequently doubted whether I had

any sense or not, and I have no hesitation in saying, that I *suspected* myself to be a *fool*, long before the usual time fixed for our entertaining such suspicion by a celebrated poet in his account of "procrastination."

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## CHAP IV.

### *CONFIDENCE.*

THE happy period of emancipation was now rapidly approaching, and preparations were made for our departure to Bingwood. My father, to prevent, I suppose, future trouble, had wished the entail to be cut off from the whole of the Erpingham property; some parts, he urged, could be sold to great advantage, and other estates more convenient might be purchased, thus adding materially to the compactness, beauty, and value, of the chief domain. He had, by some means or other, made

a friend of Villiers, who cordially entered into his plans for improvement. Villiers soon led me to be of. opinion that entails of property were national evils, and that every sensible mind would discard such a wretched remnant of ancient barbarism: "it was the greatest drawback to the advancement of a state." I had got by heart numerous instances of rapid amelioration, where facility was given to the free interchange of property of all descriptions, I could compare the situation of England before and after the reign of Henry VII., and I could trace the degraded situation of Spain, Portugal, and some other parts of the Continent of Europe, to the narrow policy of their rulers in strictly adhering to the allodial tenure, which made the impoverished land-owner the oppressor of his tenantry, by wringing large supplies from their slender means, in lieu of disposing of a part to benefit

and preserve the remainder from ruin and devastation.

With the prospect of again enjoying the delights of profusion, my father's spirits were elevated to the highest pitch, and in their exuberance he incautiously told me in the presence of Villiers, that he should have to thank me for his future means of existence, for that every part of his property was mortgaged for his life, and that his debts were besides of very considerable amount.

I had accidentally cast my eyes towards Villiers at the conclusion of the Earl's speech, when I thought I perceived a turn in his countenance, which rather surprized me; his looks in general were placid in the extreme, but he now appeared transfixed by a sudden thought. Nothing further occured at the time; the lawyers were directed to prepare the necessary deeds, to be in readiness on our return to town. The

principal creditors, with a view no doubt to the general interest, had ingeniously carved out some of the most capital estates among themselves.—Nothing but my signature was wanting to render every thing complete, by stripping the noble and ancient house of Erpingham of the means by which its dignity could be maintained.

The journey to Bingwood was as rapid as the unbending particularity of my lawyer trustee would admit; he accompanied my father and myself in the coach, the fourth seat of which was occupied by my confidential adviser. My banker trustee engaged to meet us on the spot. In the course of our progress Mr. Bearblock entertained my father with a lecture on imprudence, and myself with exhortations to avoid embarrassment in money matters, referring me to my father as an illustration of his elaborate arguments in favour of economy. The Earl grew peevish and

testy: the lawyer answered him by preaching patience, and by urging the necessity of probing a wound to effect a cure. I felt for my father, and would have silenced the lawyer, but I was only reminded, "that youthful folly should never set itself in opposition to grey hairs." My father was more than once inclined to send the lawyer to the —— before his time, by chucking him out of the coach window, but the latter wisely suffered the storm to blow over him, and waited in quietness until there was a fresh opportunity for carrying on hostilities. The fact, I believe, was, that the Earl and Mr. Bearblock had never cordially agreed, and the latter seeing the sceptre about to fall from his hand, was unwilling to quit the government without some exertion of his power. Villiers acted as the mediator, and in the absence of the lawyer begged my father to keep his temper and bear with the brute, who unfortu-

nately was possessed of the means of rendering every person uncomfortable at a time of general festivity; a few hours, and the lawyer might be treated as he deserved. My father followed the advice, and towards the latter part of the way, Mr. Bearlock, finding that his remarks ceased to give a visible annoyance, but that the Earl treated him with silent contempt, sought for refuge within himself and went to sleep.

The demonstrations of joy were such as are usual on similar events. The bells, two of which were cracked, rung incessantly a discordant peal; the tenantry and labourers proclaimed a general holiday, and stunned our ears with endless congratulations and repeated huzzas. During the whole morning, "the many rent the skies with loud applause," and with ceaseless vociferations cleared their throats for devouring the oxen which were roasting

whole, and for swallowing the strong beer which had been brewed of an extraordinary strength for the occasion; every drop of which was drank—or wasted. The whole was conducted with the utmost regularity of disorder, and was succeeded by the usual portion of aching and broken heads; but notwithstanding all the noise and bustle, I can recollect nothing at this distance of time which is worthy of recital, except that on the morning following that of my arrival at *years of discretion*, my trustees delivered to me the full possession of the Bingwood estates, amounting to upwards of fourteen thousand per annum, together with the savings of a long minority which, at the price of the funded property at that period, they stated to exceed two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling, including the balance in the hands of my banker trustee.

I was pressed to an early examina-

tion of the accounts, in order that general releases might be given. On our way down Villiers had pointed out the necessity of a strict investigation, but he now reminded me that I had property enough, and that it would be an action becoming my situation to give the releases at the moment of general joy. The great amount of the savings was a proof in itself of the correctness of the accounts, and of the unimpeachable honesty of the trustees. "Besides," he added, "suspicion is always a proof of a weak mind." Villiers seemed to have a heart formed for friendship, for he was the dear friend of the lawyer, and the particular friend of the banker.

I must do myself the justice to say that I suspected all was not right, but as weakness of mind, was a thing of all others of which I most dreaded the imputation, I signed the necessary discharges without hesitation. I had

afterwards good reason to repent of my hastiness, but it was too late.

The lawyer and the banker having now nothing to detain them, prepared to leave us, and my father full of his own affairs pressed me to accompany him to London without loss of time. But Villiers was of opinion that a further stay was necessary for my own consequence. With a view to separate me from my father, and to delay my journey to town, Villiers proposed to me to take a cursory survey of the different estates of which I was now the absolute master. "It was incumbent upon every man of sense," I was told, "to look into his own affairs." I therefore examined my *terra firma*, but through the eyes and with the sentiments of my companion. This operation consumed more time than the Earl liked. As I felt that I was acting like a man of sense, I gave a decided negative to my father's proposition of in-

stantly leaving Bingwood. He left me in anger, but I promised to follow him in a few days.

The old steward had contrived to get the principal farms into the hands of himself and family. It was not likely, therefore, that I should dissent from the opinion of Villiers, "that he was unfit to be further trusted." His discharge immediately followed, but not without a long lecture from Villiers upon honesty and integrity. My *friend* proposed to save the salary of a steward and to collect the rents himself: "twice a year such an excursion would be pleasant; besides," added he, "I shall then be able to discover and counteract any underhand and unfair dealings."

Such a steward was an invaluable treasure. Underhand and unfair dealings had been discovered, and it was a matter of importance to prevent their recurrence. Having arranged for my

own landed property by publicly instituting my friend in his new office, and desiring that his commands and directions should in every instance be implicitly obeyed, I intended returning to town to settle the affairs with my father. Being in the country, however, and at no very great distance from Erpingham, it would have been a "*great proof of folly*," not to examine a little into a property I had been destined to inherit, particularly as I was about to renounce my exclusive claim to it; "no man of sense," said the same individual, who had recommended my giving the discharge to my trustees, "would put his hand to what he did not thoroughly understand." This was indisputable, and we proceeded to Erpingham, to which place I had been hitherto a stranger.

The impression made upon my mind by the first view of the mansion inherited from my paternal ancestors, is not

in my power to describe. From an eminence which overlooked the park and extensive domain, the whole burst upon me in an instant, and I cannot help acknowledging the inward pride with which I contemplated my patrimony. Every thing before me was gigantic but proportioned. The house, the lawns, the lakes, the woods, and the deer parks, were formed on the same magnificent scale. Nature had been profuse in affording opportunities for the display of art, and art had been judiciously applied to the embellishment of nature. The genius of Brown had here soared to its nearest approach to perfection and had converted discord into sweetest harmony.

Villiers perceived how much I was affected by the scene before me? "This," said he, "is indeed a noble prospect! Here imagination has room to revel! Here is indeed an excuse for pride!"

The thought of what I had promised embarrassed me, for I had yet to learn the value of professions. I would willingly have recalled my word to my father, and to have preserved untouched the property before me I verily believe that at the moment I could have sacrificed my existence.

Villiers, since our departure from Bingwood, had ceased to be the encomiast of my father. He had occasionally made remarks upon the Earl's extravagance, and blaming his profuse expenditure, had expressed doubts whether the whole estates, turned into money would be sufficient to clear him from his debts. My pride caught the alarm, and I began to be awakened to a sense of my own interest. I balanced in my mind, the consequences of what I had agreed to perform, and I contemplated my future prospects, when at the decease of my father I should succeed to his titles, without the means

of maintaining grandeür. My ideas had taken such a lofty flight, that I considered my Bingwood property only as a good bachelor's provision, but wholly inadequate to the support of nobility. Had I been told that the fortune of many noblemen was considerably less than what I at present possessed I should in all probability have shrugged up my shoulders and pitied them.

Another view of the superb domain, which I had an opportunity of enjoying from a different situation, and which if possible, exhibited it to more advantage, fixed my wavering determination. I resolved on no account to part with a single acre, and at last worked myself to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that I fancied myself in the actual possession, and already commenced some imaginary improvements. I felt that I could partially relieve my father with my personal property, without in the

slightest degree inconveniencing myself. His debts I knew must die with himself, and I was not so ignorant of the ways of the world as to be unaware that the tradesman who trusts nobility, does it upon the calculation that the living will pay for the dead. His creditors had trusted him with their eyes open, and they had no right to reckon upon my discharging embarrassments which I had no share in creating. I did not apprehend that my father was overwhelmed with any extraordinary nicety of feeling; he would otherwise have avoided placing himself in so painful a situation. If I retained the property, the latter part of my father's life would still be rendered comfortable, and at his death the family estates would be delivered to me clear and unincumbered.

Under these impressions, I wrote to my father, desiring him to proceed no farther in the business, but that on my

return to London, I would do every thing in my power to render him comfortable in his circumstances.

The time thus consumed in traversing the Erpingham estates, were perhaps the only days I ever experienced after my arrival at maturity in which pleasure was free from alloy, for the arrangements with my father gave me no pain, as I conceived myself to be acting in strict conformity to my duty. As yet I had tasted only the blessings of wealth; but its curses had already visited me, although it was without my being aware of it, for I had placed an unlimited confidence in a most consummate scoundrel.

The weather was clear and open, and notwithstanding my eagerness again to plunge into metropolitan luxuries, I insensibly lingered round the "hall of my ancestors." I did not inform my father of my intention of remaining here, nor did I fix a specific time for being in

London. I suppose he took the chances of a letter reaching me, for in the course of post I received one to the following purport:

"Come instantly to town. You are the dupe of a designing villain. Do not delay a moment.

"ERPINGHAM."

My confidence was not easily to be shaken. The same blind obstinacy in which I persevered when resentment was once kindled, was equally strong in the pertinacious adherence in a former opinion until a change had been effected in my sentiments.

The alteration visible in the countenance of Villiers on my handing him the letter, I attributed to honest manly rage, at an unjust insinuation. I considered my father as plotting against me, and looked upon Villiers as my guardian angel. It was through his advice that I had been induced to preserve my property from being scat-

tered like chaff before the wind. My father I thought would readily believe that on such an occasion, friendship could only lead to one side, and the disinterested friend of his son must of consequence be his own enemy. Besides, my father's views had been thwarted, and that in itself was sufficient to infuriate him.

" Do you suppose me," said Villiers after he had cast his eyes over the concise epistle,—" do you suppose me to be the wretch your father would wish you to believe?"

" What reason have I for the supposition? Your conduct hitherto has certainly not justified it."

" However," he continued, " go to your father;—it is your duty. Throw away your inheritance;—It is his wish. Run yourself headlong to ruin;—you will please him. But the villain before you shall never be a witness to your folly. Adieu! be careful how you

again associate with such *villains* as myself."

Villiers abruptly left the room, and I had lost my presence of mind too far to prevent him His absence was not long, for he returned within a few minutes, to part, as he said, on friendly terms with the only person whose good opinion he had ever valued, and for whom he had ever felt a disinterested regard.

"I do not blame your father," he observed, "nor do I arraign his motives. It shall never be said that I have estranged the child from the parent. I wish to respect your father. I respect his son. I know the goodness of his son's heart. I would have deserved their mutual esteem——but ——farewell!"

"Stay my friend," I exclaimed, "blame not the son for the father's fault. Besides, my father is acting from a mistaken impulse. Nothing

more remains to be done here; let us go to London, every thing can then be explained."

"What! to appear before the father of my friend with the imputation of a villain? Never, my Lord Winterbourne! It is your duty to follow your father's directions: it is my duty to behave with becoming dignity in what concerns myself."

"My father has been deceived; he will gladly acknowledge his error."

"Granted! but if your father was weak enough to be deceived, and mean enough to apologize where no apology *ought* to be due, think you that I can countenance the deception and tacitly admit the truth of the charge, by again holding intercourse with a man who has so cruelly traduced me."

"An explanation is due to your character, and my father cannot refuse it."

"No, my Lord! a blow inflicted on

so tender a part cannot be healed by explanation. My hands are tied. It is the father of my valued friend who has wounded me! you are his security. But by the living God——but no matter. Again, my Lord, farewell! I see you would persuade me, but I am fixed and determined. You may one day be able to estimate the character of a *villain*. Here, my Lord, is my book of accounts, and in this purse you will find the balance remaining in my hands; there is no occasion for any discharge in this instance. If any incorrectness appears which I am not aware of, it shall be rectified."

I would have detained him, but there appeared an air of determination in his manner, which convinced me that all my persuasion would be ineffectual. Holding out my hand, I received his, and then suffered him to depart in silence. Villiers had previously made a discovery of his abso-

lute power over my mind, which only rendered him more anxious to rivet the fetters by a temporary absence.

The languor and *ennui* I felt on being thus deserted are indescribable. Left to myself my time hung upon my hands with a dreadful weight. The rides and walks in which I had so lately delighted, suddenly lost all their charms. A continuance at Erpingham was insupportable; and yet I dreaded to return to London, fearful of becoming the tool of my father. I had been taught to suspect my servants, and cautioned against the "weakness," of trusting hired domestics. They were estranged from me, and there was not a soul with whom I could hold intercourse. At last, feeling that any alteration must be for the better, I resolved to change the scene, and if possible to regain my former companion and bosom friend.

With this view, attended only by a

groom, who was my foster brother, and who had shown numerous marks of an ardent attachment for my person, I set off for London, intending to keep my arrival a secret from every one, and particularly from my father. On Giles I thought I could place the most implicit confidence. Never having been in London, his person was unknown to my father's household; I could therefore employ him in the double capacity of servant and spy. Giles had been bred up with me from his infancy, and when he ceased to be my playfellow he became my attendant, until his propensity to the stable led him to seek the situation of groom. He had refused all offers of advancement, and appeared to have no ambition beyond his present station. In addition to a good heart, Giles had an open disposition, was of an athletic make, and prided himself upon being what is termed a lover of fun.

I must acknowledge that I greatly deceived myself in my supposed motives for this private journey. I wished to believe that it was an act of prudence which would enable me to discover the real state of my father's affairs. But it was Villiers alone I wanted. My father, his affairs, my magnificent prospects, all vanished from before me, leaving a dreary waste, which Villiers alone could convert into a fruitful region.

I took great credit to myself, for my wise precaution in misleading my attendants, by informing them that I was merely going to Bingwood to visit my former tutor, commanding them to wait at Erpingham for my further directions.

To my astonishment, previous to my departure, a young man named William Peters, whom Villiers had placed about my person, and to whom I had insensibly become attached for his con-

stant and unremitting attention, requested his immediate discharge, unless he were permitted to accompany me. His attachment, he said, would render a separation intolerable, and if he were not allowed to attend me, he should think that I considered him no longer worthy of his situation.

My natural disposition here broke forth. Thinking that what he said appeared as if he was dictating to me, I gave him no answer, but directed him to name the amount of his wages, which I paid him without a single remark, determining in my own mind that his character should pay the price of what I considered his insolence.



## CHAP. V.

### *PHYSIOGNOMY.*

SUFFICIENTLY wary to prevent a spy upon my actions, although I did not conceive there was any thing remarkable in my conduct, I set off from Erpingham on my way to Bingwood, but at the first intersection I struck into the London road. Giles and myself were mounted on horseback. We had rather more than one hundred and fifty miles to travel, which we proposed to accomplish in three days, calculating that the horses would have ample time to recover from their exer-

tion at thier journey's end. I had now an object in view which was capable of occupying my mind. The journey was delightful; it was true, I was in a great measure left to my own thoughts, but the fatigue of riding rendered my sleep sound at night, and the continued change of scene amused me in the day time. Besides, I now reflected on my actual situation. I had a large sum in ready money, with an unincumbered estate of fourteen thousand a year in possession, an estate of three times that amount in reversion. I was wholly free from controul, and nothing was apparently wanting to make me the happiest of the happy. It is not to be wondered at, that my mind should have dwelt upon these pleasing prospects, and that I should have felt more and more exhilarated as I approached towards the focus of all that is congenial to the mind of the young, sanguine, and thoughtless.

We travelled onwards with no other

interruption than was requisite to afford the necessary repose to man and beast, until we arrived at the first village on the London side of Barnet, where, one of my horse's shoes having become loose, I was under the necessity of stopping at a blacksmith's to have it fastened on. While this operation was performing, I strolled across the way to a little inn, thinking to beguile the time with a newspaper. I had scarcely seated myself at the parlour window, when I perceived William Peters, my discharged servant, pass rapidly by, well mounted on a blood horse. Unperceived by him, I put my head out of the window and saw him speaking to the man belonging to the turnpike gate, which was situated at no great distance from the blacksmith's shed. The gate-keeper's hand was pointed to the shed, seemingly directing the attention of Peters towards it. The latter turned his head

to the blacksmith's, but in an instant, as if he had recollected himself, he spurred his horse into a hand gallop and speedily got out of sight.

The appearance of Peters on horseback did not at the time strike me as particularly remarkable; although I might perhaps have wondered a little at seeing him well mounted, and at his travelling with such expedition. I had left him behind me at Erpingham, and I had not loitered upon the road. I caught sight of him again as I got off my horse at the ——— hotel in ——— Street.

The few changes of linen which Giles had brought in his saddle bags were nearly exhausted on the road. But in London, I well knew that every thing could be procured in an instant: the want of a clean shirt therefore would soon be remedied. However, I now discovered a striking instance of my want of foresight, or

rather of my want of thought. Giles had fortunately money enough of his own to bear our expences on the road; he had, of course no occasion to apply to me. But his little stock was nearly exhausted as he paid the last turnpike, and he then ventured to mention to me the state of his finances. They were completely disordered, and I was by no means in a condition to furnish him with the ways and means. In losing my confidential companion, I lost my treasurer and purse bearer, and was literally without a single farthing in my pocket. Villiers had, indeed, professed to lay on the table, previous to his departure, the money which he said belonged to me, but I had deposited the purse in my travelling case. I now felt myself in an awkward predicament, as neither Giles nor his master possessed within themselves the art of living upon air, or the

science of creating something out of nothing.

My personal property had chiefly been placed in the funds, and my trustees had informed me that it was transferred to my own name; but I was wholly unacquainted with the means of disposing of any part. Independent of my ignorance of the mode of raising money in this way, I was wise enough to be aware that it would be requisite to identify my person, which did not suit with my present views of privacy.

The balance in the hand of my banker trustee was likewise placed to my own account, but I had completely forgotten the name of the firm, and besides they must be unacquainted with my hand writing. The sale of the horses seemed the only feasible way, under present circumstances, of satisfying present wants and providing a small supply for the future. But Giles

was a total stranger in London, and a complete novice in the ways of the world. To live without money was next to impossible. To procure it, I sent for the landlord of the hotel, and told him that I wished to sell the horses immediately, but that my servant had never been in London before, and that I did not wish to be seen at all in the business. Mine host viewed me with an eye of suspicion, and left the room with the look of a person who felt that he had discovered a secret, telling me that he would send for a horse dealer.

I sat down to ruminate on my future plans, satisfied that the sale of my horses would furnish me with the means of preserving me incognito, for at least some time to come, and was debating within myself whether my first endeavours should be directed towards Villiers or towards my father. But before I could arrive at any satis-

factory conclusion, Giles made his appearance, seemingly bruised from head to foot. He informed me that the people of the house had been questioning him closely; "but," said Giles, "they got nothing out of me; I've told'em lies by the score. One man laughed and said my master's time was pretty well come; another said, that I were too pretty a lad to be hanged yet. I told him that might be a Lunnun compliment, but it was a sort of a thing in our country we should answer in this way, said I, laying him as flat as a pancake upon the floor. Another then laid hold of me by the collar, but I sent he after 'tother. Then all hell broke loose, so I fought my way through them, to tell ye all about it, for I heard some of 'em talking of a constable and a warrant."

During the recital of Giles's tale, my indignation at this treatment of my servant advanced to the highest pitch,

and I turned in my mind the most effectual mode of revenging the insult. I could not altogether acquit Giles of blame, in probably giving vent to a great deal of nonsense, in answer to enquires proceeding from mere curiosity; but my charge to him not to let me be known on any consideration, was an excuse, if not sufficient to free him from censure, at least enough to palliate the offence. Giles had hardly concluded his narrative, when an ill-looking man entered the room, and without the ceremony of an introduction, or announcing his business, advanced towards me. He viewed me from head to foot, scrutinizing my features with the eyes of a lynx. He looked from time to time at a printed paper which he held in his hand, muttering to himself as he alternately perused me and the hand bill.

"He answers the description," said my new visitor, calling to some person

without, "but you had better see him yourself. You may be able to swear to him."

Giles and myself sought for information in the looks of each other, but there was nothing which could afford it. Farther light was, however, thrown upon the affair by the entrance of a little herring gutted animal, accompanied among others by a jolly buxom dame of forty or thereabouts, dressed in flaming yellow from top to toe. A pair of light grey eyes twinkled under a low forehead, and that forehead was surmounted by an immence toupée. The reader will bear in mind that I was then forty years younger than I am at the present moment, and that I speak of the delectable dresses of the day, when every head supported a living colony of freebooters,—when every contact of heads afforded opportunity for emigration,—

and when a mouse could wanton without discovery in a lady's curl.

"Pray, dear Mr. Constable," said the lady, "hold the *w*illain fast; I would not be frit so again, no not for never so much. Oh! its him, I'll take my bible oath on't. Mr. Ninethman, vy dont you swear to him?"

"Vy lovee, an oath is a matter of conscience, and the pious Mr. Barebones, says, swear not at all. Besides I tr*i*mbled so."

"A fiddlestick for Mr. Barebones," cried the lady swelling like a turkey cock, and almost bursting with rage; "he has picked your pocket enough already, you snivelling puppy! You a man, quotha! You can look at a thief that will vheedle you out of your money, vhile ——."

"When this farce is ended," said I haughtily, and with as much dignity as I could possibly assume, "I suppose you will all have the goodness to

quit the room. If this is your public room, landlord, I desire a private one?"

"Oh!" said a coxcomb, who had made his entry with the rest, "pray let the gentleman be private, constable! Gad he is the first I ever heard of that was in a hurry for a condemned cell."

My countenance, I imagine began to make a terrific appearance, for the puppy to avoid probably a derangement of his sweet person made a hasty retreat towards the door.

"If so be as how the gemman, is a gemman," said another blackguard looking fellow, "he need vant for nothing, and if he chuses to pay for a coach to the office, ve shan't pres[illegible] his valking. Nobody knows more betterer than ve vat's due to a gemman. But mayhap the gemman may like a glass of vine, or a flash of lightening, before he goes."

"Yes! yes!" said the lady in yellow. "He is a pretty gentleman, indeed, his very looks would hang him!"

Giles had discovered by this time that this extraordinary discourse was levelled at myself. Indignant at such language being directed to his master, and being to much of a Briton to strike a woman, he coolly vented his rage upon her unoffending spouse, whom he civilly and without noise or ceremony extended at his length upon the ground. This, to be sure, was not a work of much difficulty, considering the disproportion in the muscular powers of the parties; but Giles had only intended it as conveying his intention of becoming the champion of his master's cause. He had now begun the affray, and he was ready to maintain his share in the conflict which he had roused.

The constable, for such was my first visitor, to prevent further mis-

chief, and to secure one of his prisoners at least, from the possibility of escape, as well as to avenge the cause of the recumbent tailor, prepared himself, by collecting his strength, to place Giles in a similar situation. A mighty blow was projected from a pair of Herculean shoulders, which, had it lighted where it was intended, would have placed my co-adjutor completely *hors de combat*. But as no one could be more aware than Giles, although no coward, that the "better part of valour is discretion," he wisely stooped his head, and suffered the compliment intended for him to pass with diminished force to the puppy before-mentioned. The blow was doubly effective: it not only levelled the object who received it, but, extended its force according to the rules of percussion, to my friend in yellow the amiable Mrs. Ninethman. The lady falling by the natural laws of gravity, furnished, un-

willingly, an enviable resting place to the reclining beau. The constable, who by over reaching himself in missing Giles, had almost lost his balance, was easily precipitated on the recumbent pair, by a slight motion from Giles's fist.

These events passed in such rapid succession, that I could hardly believe the scene to be real, particularly when looking to the opposite side to that which had hitherto been the hottest part of the battle, I perceived that the landlord and the constable's companion, had been equally the victims of Giles's prowess; the latter having seized at the same moment the leg on which each was then placing the most dependence, and thus accomplished their overthrow.

" Now, my lord," said Giles, forgetting himself for the first time, " the coast is clear."

" At the sound of " my lord," my

prostrate enemies were aghast. I could perceive the lower jaws gradually descend. Every eye was directed towards me in a vacant unmeaning stare, but not one of the party seemed capable of resuming the perpendicular posture.

I can form no idea of the time the reclining parties would have remained in their present position. The uniformity of the scene was, however, interrupted by the sudden and unexpected entrance of Villiers.

Nothing could exceed his astonishment as he viewed the field of battle. "Heyday! my Lord," said he, "this is taking London by storm; the whole world, at this rate, would be unable to withstand you and youi lieutenant-general."

By this time the landlord had regained his footing, and being acquainted with Villiers, asked "if the gentleman was known to him, for he had appeared under very suspicious circumstances."

"Know him," replied Villiers, "aye old Bonifice, and so will all of you know him to your cost. But to save trouble and circumlocution, he is Viscount Winterbourne, the possessor of twenty thousand a year in his own right, and eldest son to the earl of Erpingham."

Dismay seized every countenance. By degrees the leading personages were on their legs. The constable's assistant was the first to retreat, leaving his principal to make peace for both. The constable hoped my honour would consider that he was only acting according to his duty, which he always took as the guide of his conduct; then without waiting for a reply, he followed the example of his comrade. The lady and her husband had regained their footing, by the assistance of the landlord. The husband would have made good his retreat, without the ceremony of taking leave, but his wife caught

him by the arm, and taking some cards from his pocket "purtested that she vas vastly sorry for vhat had happened, and vondered how the constable could be so blind, seeing as how nobility vas written upon my forehead." She further said, that although her husband looked so like a fool, he was one of the best tailors in London for strong vork; and assured me, that I should find the very best of treatment in Round Court.

The landlord retreated in his turn, leaving only the gentleman who would have sent me to the condemned hole. He was setting his face for a long train of apologies, but seeing Giles in the act of opening the window, he prudently made to the door, as by far the pleasantest way of ejectment.

## CHAP. VI.

### *DETERMINATION.*

THUS freed from my intruders, I immediately held out my hand to welcome Villiers, and in the joy of my heart thanked him for his timely interference, which had saved me from an awkward exposure. I did not give him time to reply, but told him that he must forget our former difference, which was solely occasioned by his own hastiness, and that he must replace himself upon his former footing.

Villiers assured me that my interest had been the sole object of his incessant attention. If I suspected him, I injured him. There were, however, in consequence of my father's letter,

some particular points, the discussion of which must be reserved for a future occasion. Our agreement or disagreement upon them, would, he said, determine the continuance or final close of our friendship and intimacy. It was true he was not rich, but he was independent in principle, and his honour and self-approbation were dearer to him than life. The latter he would willingly lose for me, but the two former he would forfeit for no man, nor would he for an instant continue an acquaintance, where the purity of his intentions were doubted.

When victory had declared herself on our side, and when the field of battle was left in our possession, without a chance of its being again disputed, Giles made his way to the scene of his early exploits, to enjoy the fruits of his conquest, or, in other words, to exult over the vanquished. From him I could not expect to encrease my stock

of information, but as I was desirous of learning the cause of the strange occurrences to which I had just been witness, I requested Villiers to make the necessary inquiries. During his absence, the folly and thoughtlessness of my conduct rushed forcibly upon my mind. I had set out with the intention of investigating the circumstances of others, and from want of experience had thrown myself into a most unpleasant situation, from which, but for the opportune arrival of Villiers, I should not have been able to extricate myself, without a considerable degree of difficulty, and without a total failure of my plans. Since I have seen more of the world, and of its ways, I have ceased to wonder at the state of *surveillance* which the line of proceeding I had adopted had in a great measure warranted. I was now thoroughly convinced, notwithstanding all my sense and abilities, which

were to render me an ornament to my age and country, how totally unfit I was, in every respect, to be my own guide, and how necessary to my future comfort and happiness was the society of a *disinterested* friend, well versed in "men and manners," and on whose judgment I could safely rely. What a proof had Villiers given me of the extreme delicacy of his friendship, by quitting me, at the first moment that an attempt was made to poison my mind against him.

The unexpected appearance of Villiers did not occur to me as at all extraordinary, I only thought of the happy effects of his interposition; and it was a considerable time afterwards that I learnt the cause of my then seeing him. Peters, it appeared, had been left a spy upon my actions, with directions on no account to lose sight of me for an instant. Villiers, instead of going to London as he proposed to do when

we parted, concealed himself in the neighbourhood of Erpingham, and with the assistance of Peters, whom he had mounted for the occasion, and who left directions for his employer at every place on the road, had arrived in London, and was at the hotel a few minutes after us. I have had my suspicions whether my being considered as a highwayman was not the effect of his instigation. But, be that as it may, the event answered his purpose, and the business altogether made me more than ever his dupe.

Villiers, on his return, informed me that the uproar had been principally occasioned by the prevaricating nonsense which Giles had uttered in the place allotted to the servants. The neighbour and particular friend of the landlord, Mr. Ninethman, the tailor, who was in the practice of driving his loving wife in a one-horse chaise to their villa at Finchley, had been

stopped and robbed upon the common, two evenings before, by a couple of highwaymen. My offering to sell the horses from which Giles and myself had just alighted at the door of the hotel, and wishing that neither myself nor servant should be seen in the business, gave rise to the suspicion. The tailor and his wife, with a constable and his attendant, were sent for to identify and secure the supposed highwaymen.

Thus ended my first outset in life under my own guidance. From the sublime to the ridiculous, said a once great man, is but a step; and the distance did not appear much greater between a peer and a highwayman. Had I been tried under the code Napoleon, which presumes every man to be guilty until he can prove his innocence, the distance would have been still less. But thanks to our blessed constitution, every man is considered

innocent until the laws of his country declare him to be guilty.

The decided approbation of Villiers was bestowed upon my intention of getting at the knowledge of my father's circumstances, and he kindly undertook to save me the trouble of making the necessary inquiries, by attending to the business himself; but on one condition,—that I should keep my arrival in town a profound secret from my father and his connections, and that I should be entirely guided by his instructions. On these simple conditions, to which it was impossible for me to refuse my assent, he consented again to watch over my interest and take the management of my concerns. The unjust suspicions of my father he could never forgive, but his regard for me had induced him to wave all petty considerations. But he could never associate with me, if by holding intercourse with my father, I tacitly counte-

nanced such an abominable imputation.

He would use his utmost exertions in the development of the Earl's difficulties. My duty would then perhaps lead me to my father: in that case he should have served me to the utmost of his power, consistently with what he considered due to his own character and consequence. He would there take his leave. The Earl was a man equally well acquainted with mankind as himself, and equally capable of guiding me in my career. Besides he (Villiers) had only friendship to recommend him, whereas the Earl would view me with the affection of a parent.

As I could now make use of my friend, there was no occasion to sacrifice two valuable horses for the pittance which necessity might previously have compelled me to accept. The cash business then came under consideration. Villiers could apply to

my late trustees in my name, without my being supposed to be in London, and could settle every thing as well as if I had been present in *propria persona.* They were both acquainted with his person, and with the confidence I reposed in him; many obstacles to my obtaining an immediate supply were thus removed. I addressed a letter to Mr. Bearblock, desiring the lawyer to furnish my friend with all the information in his power respecting my cash and funded property. The sum in the hands of the bankers was amply sufficient to answer every purpose, and as my signature was easily authenticated our wants were readily supplied.

My confinement in the day time became extremely irksome to me; but this was in some measure counterbalanced by the debauchery and dissipation of the night. With a view of affording me amusement, and of preventing the hours hanging too heavily upon my hands,

Villiers led me into every excess of the tavern and bagnio, until I was thoroughly satiated. In a house of the latter description I was an inmate upwards of a week, having been made apprehensive of a discovery at the hotel. At the tavern I constantly met with what Villiers denominated *choice* companions, but in what their *choice*ness consisted I could never properly understand. It was neither in their eating nor in their drinking, for they swallowed indiscriminately whatever was put before them, and it certainly was not in their language, for that consisted of stale jests, grossness without wit, and ribaldry without sense. One thing however I remarked; they acted towards Villiers with the most complete subserviency; they were at his beck and call, and came and went at his command. This made me entertain a high opinion of my own consequence, seeing myself so differently treated from

those who in dress and appearance were seemingly my equals, and, who, for ought I knew at the time, might have reasons, like myself, for dropping their titles. I observed that Villiers always discharged the reckoning, but I thought that might have arisen from a desire on his part to save his friends all the trouble possible.

The accounts which Villiers laid before me from time to time were absolutely terrifying. My father's difficulties appeared to exceed, as Villiers had predicted, the whole value of the Erpingham estates. To cut off the entail would be madness; it would be only to ruin myself, for my father would still have nothing left. His person was sacred, and I could supply him with every comfort except that of enabling him to enjoy the satisfaction of feeling himself clear from debt.

My mind was fully made up on the business; but unwilling to make to my

father a communication which I knew would vex and irritate him, I wished to devolve the task upon Villiers. From this proposition Villiers started with horror. "Do you imagine for an instant, my Lord Winterbourne," said he, "that I can submit to such a degradation. I am your friend, but only to a certain extent. Press me further, and we are strangers."

"Besides," added he, "on so delicate a point the intervention of a third person would render the refusal doubly galling. It would be a tacit acknowledgement of your dependence on the opinion of others. Your father might well blame you if he supposed for an instant that you were acting under the influence and advice of another, instead of from your own conviction. After what has alread passed with your father, I ought perhaps to be the last person to urge you to an interview, which is perhaps unavoidable. While

I allow of my anxiety to preserve your friendship and regard, my fears naturally suggest to me the next to certainty that I shall be made the subjeet of fresh abuse. The villain will probably become a demon, although had he suffered the son to plunge headlong into ruin, with the father he might have been an angel of purity."

I solemnly assured Villiers that it was utterly impossible for any thing to shake the unbounded confidence I reposed in him. It was founded, I said, upon the basis of gratitude and opinion, and was not likely to be disturbed by every trifling breeze of falsehood and scandal.

After revolving in our minds the several plans which presented themselves, in order to select that which on mature consideration appeared the most desirable, we decided that, the communication would be best made in a letter from myself, and that

it should be confined to as few words as possible. The Earl would have time to make the best of his disappointment, and if he gave way to passion he could vent it upon whoever happened to come within his reach. I wrote as follows:

"My Lord,

"It is after the most serious reflection upon our respective circumstances, that I am under the painful necessity of informing you, however unpleasant it may be to yourself, that I conceive it an act of duty to myself and family to withhold my consent to arrangements which must infallibly lead to the ruin of an ancient and honourable house. My determination, my Lord, is fixed, and no consideration whatever shall tempt me to depart from it by severing the noble inheritance of my forefathers.

"As I before informed your Lordship, my personal property shall be at your entire disposal, to promote

your happiness in any way you think proper, but beyond that I should lose sight of my own dignity and your real interest.

"In every sentiment of gratitude and filial affection no one can more abound than

"Your devoted,

"WINTERBOURNE.'

I dispatched my letter, by the hand of Giles, with directions to take it in the evening, and simply to leave it with the porter, without a single remark. As it contained neither place nor date it was not very likely that I should have any reply to it. I had been in London upwards of three weeks and during the whole time I had never once thought of the surprise which my unaccountable absence must have occasioned. But as I did not make my appearance before my father at the time he had every reason to expect me in

London, he probably anticipated the subject of my letter.

After waiting a few days, to allow my father time to cool, I resolved to go to Erpingham House for the purpose of explaining more fully my reasons. Of my father I was independent in every respect, and I had never experienced from him the slightest paternal solicitude; but there was an indiscribable something of which I stood in awe. I inwardly dreaded the meeting, for I doubted whether on an interview I should be able to maintain my determination, however wisely it had been formed.

My seeking an interview with my father, however, was rather against the opinion of my adviser, but as some trivial occurrences had given him a further insight into my character, and had proved to him that there was no inconsiderable portion of obstinacy lurking at the bottom, which, when called into

action might be difficult to smother, he did not use much exertion in dissuading me, leaving things to operate in his favour of their own accord, from the known violence of my father's character, and from my techiness; of both of which he had met with ample proofs.

My visit was short. My father charged me with completing his ruin. He expressed his contempt for the abject wretch who could so willingly become the tool of a swindling adventurer. My punishment, he said, was rapidly approaching. It would be the natural result of my blind credulity. "The scoundrel" added he "under whose influence you are acting, would have sold you before, and will still sell you, to the highest bidder."

He was proceeding to say something of Villiers having required five thousand pounds for *his* consent to the arrangements, but before he could make the story intelligible, his rage had be-

come so ungovernable that it was useless for me to attempt to reason with him. I had remained silent during the whole of his harangue, which closed with his ordering me to quit his presence for ever.

My pride was roused. It had been my intention to have administered to his wants, and I could not help feeling myself unfairly treated. I left the house with a firm resolution of attending to the latter part of his request, to which I ever after adhered.

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## CHAP. VII.

### *TASTE.*

ALTHOUGH I had never known a father's care nor a father's fondness, I could not help feeling much disturbed at thus parting in anger with the author of my being, whom I thought myself destined never to see again. However much all ties of blood may be ridiculed by those who maintain the superiority of mind over matter, or who regard the social affections as the offspring of habit and education, there is a certain feeling grateful to the heart in occasional intercourse with

near relations. The ties of blood may be disregarded, but it is nevertheless consolatory to an individual to fancy that he is not "himself alone" in the world, but that there are others, let the motive be what it will, whether pride or something else, who take an interest in his welfare. Certain qualms of conscience occasionally told me, that I might have acted otherwise towards my father, and still preserved my reputation for "good sense and discernment." But I partook too largely of his disposition for obstinacy to make any advances towards a reconciliation. From him none could be expected. My intentions towards him, I was satisfied were good, and I reasoned with myself that I had done my duty as far as I was permitted:

The advice of Villiers might have been abstractly good in itself, but I could not in my heart acquit him of being the cause of this estrangement. My sus-

picions of him were somewhat roused, contrary to the declaration I had made to him that my confidence was, and would continue unshaken. There was a strong shade of probability in the charge my father had made against him, but as nothing further arose at that time to confirm my suspicions, and, as I was, in a manner, driven upon Villiers as the only person who could advice and direct me, they soon died away. I determined however to be upon my guard, and to be guided by my own impulse alone. How far I was enabled to adhere to my resolution will hereafter appear.

On my return to the hotel I found Villiers in waiting. He was by no means suprised at the result of the conference. It was what he said he anticipated, and I ought doubly to rejoice at my escape. My father's intemperate haste, he considered, had been my greatest friend in fixing my

wavering resolution. Wavering, he called it, because my character was deficient in nothing but stability. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. "You now," he continued, "know the Earl's disposition, and you must *now* be well aware of the weakness of the foundation upon which his conclusions are built. In his passion he is regardless of consequences, and woe be to him who thwarts his views or opposes his designs, or whom he chooses to consider as having been instrumental in the frustration of either. But you are *now* your own master in every sense of the word. Your father has released you from all further claims, and has spurned your proffered services. It is fit that you *now* assume your rank in society, and that your establishment in life should be proportioned to your fortune. Your father must have resources of which we are not aware, and although he does not permit you to think for *him*, he

cannot deprive you of the liberty of both thinking and acting for yourself."

I had as great an inclination to use my fortune as my *friend* had to abuse it. The idea of a corresponding establishment was therefore embraced without hesitation, and means were immediately taken to convert idea into reality. We removed from my quarters of concealment to an hotel of the first importance, and employed our mornings in search of a house in which my grandeur could be displayed to advantage. After much labour in vain, the house of Lord Sniperhead, in Grosvenor Square, was offered to me as a tremendous bargain. His lordship had been just *dished*, and had declared his intention of ruralizing; the air of London having a bad effect upon his nerves. I took the opinion of an eminent upholsterer, who had furnished the house and who was of course the most competent judge of its value.

His Lordship was considerably in the upholsterer's debt, but that was a circumstance which, he took care to inform me, could not bias the opinion of a strictly honest man. Taking his advice, I subsequently received his congratulations on being the purchaser at the price of ten thousand guineas. My bargain, he told me, was worth a couple of thousand any day of the week, if I thought proper to part with it. Poor Lord Sniperhead was obliged to sell in a hurry. Could he have waited the regular market, it was impossible to say what price could not have been obtained. I was satisfied with my purchase, and as the upholsterer had been the means of my procuring it, I could not do otherwise than avail myself of his taste and assistance, in rendering the house fit for my reception.

While the upholsterer was carrying on his operations, and actually furnishing my house with *new* goods,

which he managed to obtain by the simple process of an execution on the goods and chattles of the former owner, we fixed our abode in a suite of elegant apartments in Albemarle Street. My servants were summoned to town, and I began to assume the appearance of a man of rank and fashion. But in lodgings, it was utterly impossible to indulge in that luxury and splendour which I had contemplated ; I therefore pressed forward the labours of the upholsterer, thinking every day an age which intervened between the prospect and the possession. I remember observing once or twice to Mr. Drapery, the upholsterer, that some of the mahogany furniture did not look to be new, but he assured me he had taken the most particular pains in manufacturing *my* goods with wood that had been thoroughly seasoned by age. The fact was, that it had not only been seasoned by age but by wear. But

Villiers told me that such petty considerations were below the notice of a nobleman.

Nothing is more easy to the favoured sons of fortune, than an introduction into the first circles. Wealth is a passport to every mixed assemblage, where its possessor is eagerly courted to enlarge the sphere of his acquaintance. To a single man, whether he be old or young, every facility is afforded. He meets with allurements in all directions, and may pick and cull where he pleases. Every bait is thrown out by match-making matrons to provide for their daughters or nieces ; nor are daughters and nieces in general less anxious to embrace an opportunity of escaping from bondage. My evenings were occupied in a continued round of company, but all attacks upon my heart were unsuccessful—my time was not yet come. I had, indeed, no leisure to fall in love ; and without leisure, I

verily believe, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, Cupid's arrows would be launched in vain.

The house was magnificently fitted up, and superbly decorated. The genius of Mr. Drapery was allowed full scope, and the grandeur of his ideas was exemplified in every thing—even in the amount of his bill. But I had the satisfaction of hearing on all sides, that Lord Winterbourne's house was a masterpiece of elegance and taste. This in itself was an ample compensation for a few extra thousands—at least so Villiers assured me; and as his opinion somewhat corresponded with my own, I did not entertain a doubt of its correctness. I spared no expence in my horses, carriages, or servants. My wine-cellar was filled with the choicest and most expensive wines; and the establishment of a bachelor, who had not completed his two and-twentieth year, might vie,

in every respect, with that of the first family in the state. The bustle attendant on these arrangements completely occupied my mind for three months. But before I could open my house in a style suitable to its magnificence, the London season had elapsed, and the chief votaries of fashion had departed to the country to lay in a fresh stock of health and strength against the next winter's dissipation. The house-warming was therefore deferred to the following year.

On emerging from the obscurity in which I had buried myself on my first arrival in town, I removed my banking account from the city, which I disdained to have any thing to do with, to the house of Messrs. Diddle, Crack and Co. in Pall Mall. To save unnecessary trouble, I furnished those gentlemen with a power of attorney to sell out stock, desiring them to consider my fixed balance at ten thousand

pounds, and to manage the account accordingly, without subjecting me or themselves to an unnecessary correspondence. However weak it may appear, I was for a time highly gratified with the power of drawing for immense sums, which I paid in again. I took as much pleasure in pulling about a heap of gold, as Potemkin did in handling his diamonds. But I soon grew tired. From this practice, however, sprung the first misfortune I ever experienced.

Soon after I made the purchase of my house, in riding through the Park, I was struck with the appearance of an elegantly-dressed female, who was walking with a matron-like woman, that might have passed for her mother. The form of the younger lady was graceful in the extreme, nor did her face do any discredit to her form. I had never, in my own opinion, behold so enchanting an object. It would be

useless for me to enter into a minute description of her personal beauties; it is sufficient to state, that their effects upon me were irresistible. But however my thoughts were occupied, I cannot exactly vouch for the purity of my intentions.

Villiers, who, as usual, accompanied me, seeing my attention so rivetted, immediately offered his services in ascertaining the name and condition of the fair *incognita*; and with that view pretended to take his leave of me. He rode off in an opposite direction, with one of the grooms, but in a few minutes I saw him alight, and, at a distance, follow the ladies on foot.

I returned home in a state of impatience. I had seen an object to desire, but as to love it was out of the question. Had there been much family or consequence to boast of, I was aware that females so attired would have been attended with a protector,

in the shape of a footman. I counted the hours as they struck, and looked every ten minutes at my watch; but night came and no appearance of Villiers. I sat up in the expectation of receiving intelligence, which would allay my fervor, until the clock announced the near approach of daylight. I then gave up all hopes of seeing him till the morning, and went to rest. Villiers was in the breakfast-room when I entered it. He gave me a long history of the difficulties he had experienced in the pursuit, but his perseverance had been at last rewarded by ascertaining, that the ladies resided in Edward Street, Cavendish Square. Their name he said was Henderson. The elder lady was the widow of a colonel in the army, and the younger was her only daughter. Their means were rather confined, but their respectability undoubted.

This intelligence gave me the highest

satisfaction, and my gratitude to my friend, as far as words could go, was unbounded. Words answered every purpose to him, for my purse was already less mine than his own.

In the business I had now on hand, my companion was of the most essential service. To his other accomplishments I found him admirably qualified for the honourable office of a pimp. Nothing was farther from my thoughts in this indeed, than marriage. The negociation would be, for a wife in every respect but the ceremony. However splendidly the table of a bachelor might be set out, there was a something wanting to render it complete. A lovely female would grace the head of it, enliven it by her charms, as well as by supplying it with a fresh topic of conversation. For I had already found out that sprightliness in the rising generation required a constant supply of novelty to preserve it from dulness

and insipidity. Besides, my phaeton and horses had been sufficiently seen and admired—my finery was grown stale. A beautiful woman by my side in my morning's drive, would again render me an object of notice, or rather an object of envy; for a desire of being envied is, after all, the main spring upon which the fashionable world performs its functions. Like other idle fools who rail at matrimony, I was determined not to surrender my liberty. I had no aversion to entering upon a connection which should endure as long as I *loved*, but as yet, I had an insuperable objection to fetter myself with indissoluble chains as long as I *lived*.

Here Villiers was quite at home, and entered upon the negociations without delay. It never entered my head at the time how much I was degrading myself, by associating with such a despicable character as that of a

pander. But, at all events, I was not singular; for, from the observations I have since made, I believe there are few to be found among the nobility or gentry, who have not, at some period or other of their lives, disgraced themselves in a similar manner; and if such degradation can be at all palliated and excused, it is when the current of the blood flows rapidly, and not when age has tempered its impetuosity.

The proceedings, as I was led to suppose, were conducted with the utmost delicacy and caution. I was requested, as I hoped to attain the summit of my hopes, to avoid all personal interference. At length, after a few days of most intolerable suspense, which appeared to me to be so many ages, I was blessed with an interview with the charming Miss Henderson. This completed my captivity, and I verily think, that had my inexperience been kept in proper play, and had not

the intentions of Villiers been otherwise directed, my determination might have failed me, and I might have been drawn in to convert the cast-off mistress of Sir Clarence Dupely into a future countess.

Villiers perceived that I was too far gone for his purposes. His reign would necessarily cease on my placing myself under an influence superior to his own. A mistress or a wife who was capable of obtaining an ascendancy over my mind, would have been equally fatal to his views. He therefore contrived to draw me away; and to prevent a further intercourse, informed me I had so betrayed the ardency of my attachment, that, without good management, the goods would cost more than they were worth. I restrained my impatience, and by his advice proposed settlements, and ventured to offer terms in a letter to the mother. It was indignantly returned, accompanied by

an answer from the old lady, upbraiding me with the cruelty of my conduct towards "her dear Emma." They were not rich, she said, but they had hitherto been virtuous; and she trusted that her beloved Emma would ever be free from the wicked designs of that base deceiver—man. Heaven alone could help those who had only virtue for their portion. Her daughter, she trusted Providence, had been brought up in the practice of piety, apart from sin, and would do credit, she hoped, to her education, and her mother's example.

In the impulse of the moment, I should have offered to appease injured innocence by laying my hand and fortune at the dear Emma's feet; but Villiers checked me by saying:—

"Plague on these squeamish toads, one does not know how to catch them. If one out-bids the market price, it makes them saucy; and if one un-

der-bids, they are directly virtuous and innocent. Send her a *carte blanche*, and then let us see the extent of her conscience."

The remainder of the negociation was conducted solely by Villiers. What actually passed, I know not; but we were all of us his dupes. He constantly kept us asunder, and amused me by tales of Miss Emma's scruples and delicacy.

Villiers said he offered the *carte blanche*, and narrowly escaped being kicked down stairs for his pains. The ladies, he added, had declared their intention of immediately placing themselves, where they would be free from a repetition of such insults. I sent him back to make all the amends in my power; but they had left their apartments in a hackney coach, of which no one had noticed the number, and no one could inform him where the coachman had been directed to

drive. In the management of this business I proved the immense advantage of a deputy; had I gone to make the enquiries myself, I should have been satisfied that the virtuous Emma and her mamma, had adopted that prudent mode of retreat, not to clear themselves from solicitations on my part, but to avoid the trouble of discharging certain pecuniary obligations, which they had contracted in the neighbourhood, as well as to prevent the necessity of accounting for their being possessed of goods which certain tradesmen had declared to have lost.

But as I was not aware of these circumstances till I became accidently acquainted with them, after my separation from Villiers, I acted under the first impulse. On his bringing me the intelligence, I gave way to my usual rage at being thus disappointed in the sanguine expectations I had

formed. I know not to what a pitch my vehemence would have carried me, but my passion gradually subsided when Villiers reminded me of some inconsistencies in Miss Emma's manner which, I was obliged to confess, did not exactly correspond with the assumed rigidity of the mamma. He also hinted at the style of dress she had adopted. It had every thing about it, that was elegant and becoming It was in the very height of the fashion, and exposed more charms than there was perhaps any real occasion for.

The wound was only skin deep, and was speedily healed. All recollection was soon dissipated by the fascinating charms of the dice box, to which Villiers now led me, with a view of weaning my attention from pursuits, which might endanger his own consequence. The sample which he had already witnessed of my devotion to female

charms, was sufficient to convince him that a recurrence was far from desirable. But as the blank left in the mind by the cessation of one passion must be occupied by another, nothing was left but travelling or gaming. For the former I had no inclination as I was not yet tired of my own country. The latter was therefore chosen as I could enjoy it without giving up other pleasures which, as yet had not begun to cloy.

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# CHAP. VIII.

## *HONOUR.*

BY the introduction of the Earl of Cullymore, I now became a member of the fashionable clubs. At his Lordship's intercession Villiers was likewise admitted, although I was given to understand at the time, that the honour which was conferred upon my companion was entirely on my own account. My acquaintance with Lord Cullymore was of no very long standing; he was a personage held in no very great esteem by the respectable part of the community, but as he was

a cheerful addition to a bachelor's table, by a vast deal of ribaldry, which I then thought to be wit, he was always a welcome visitor, and in many points was likely to make a formidable rival to Villiers. His Lordship was equal to the latter in meanness, but his superior in the art of exciting attention. My companion was all servility, while the Earl cloaked his subserviency under the guise of friendship, which he professed to entertain for me in an unbounded manner. Indeed, he gave me frequent proofs of it, for he was frequently declaring that I was the only man upon earth from whom he had a regard sufficient to borrow money. His Lordship was unhappily experiencing considerable delays in the payment of his rents, which rendered the loan of a *few* hundreds for a *few days* a matter of some little convenience. This was repeated at intervals, but as I kept no accounts,

I have no idea of the actual extent of his Lordship's esteem for me.

In addition to his Lordship I had another member of his family upon my shoulders. The honourable and reverend Adolphus Cully was a regular attendant at my breakfast table. His remarks extended but a little way beyond eulogizing the noble conduct of "my brother Cullymore."

"He is a noble fellow, my Lord Winterborne. But his cursed Irish tenants keep him so behind hand with his rents that his liberal hands are tied;—I have always received a princely income from him;—his soul and every thing about him is noble;—I have just been presented to a glorious living, but poor fellow, his cursed Irish tenants keep him so behind hand that it is positively out of his power to advance me the first fruits."

"Pray, Sir, what is the amount?"

"A trifle!—Three hundred pounds!"

"Allow me to advance it to you. It must be a glorious living, indeed."

"A noble living! but it is a horrible thing to borrow money. It lays one under such obligations. I cannot think of troubling you. I had rather lose the living."

"Nay I must insist upon it."

"It is hard, very hard, to be deaf to the proffers of a noble friendship."

"We will say no more, Mr. Cully. This draft will I hope answer your purpose."

"You'll take my acknowledgement?"

"Not the least occasion Between friends, such ceremony is useless."

"Very right——With men of honour ——Good morning, my Lord!"

"You have not finished your breakfast, Mr. Cully!"

"The living! the living! my Lord!"

I did not see Mr. Cully again for several days. He had then unfor-

tunately lost the living, by being too late with the first fruits. But he had the promise of another, and should have his money ready that it might not slip through his fingers.

His next application to me was dated from Newgate, where he was confined for a debt of eight pounds. It was to request the loan of a guinea. I sent him ten by the hands of his brother, who expressed an intention one day of going to see him, but I since heard that the gold was stopped in transitu.

The employment of the gaming table was new to me, and my mind for a time could feel all the delightful sensations of hope and fear, joy and horror, suspense and certainty, at a low stake. It afforded me no small amusement to view the same countenance alternately sunk by disappointment and raised by exultation. To see the eagerness which every one showed, dur-

ing the moment of doubt, and the varied passions which marked the result. Joy was counting its heaps in one corner of the room, while despair sat fixed and stupid at another. In a third corner I frequently perceived a miserable shrivelled old man, who I was told had realized an immense fortune by *honour*, without touching a card or a dice box. His practice was to lend money over night to be returned upon *honour* next morning with an enormous premium. It was in every sense of the word a debt of *honour*, and the borrower could not again shew his face till " Jew Jack" expressed himself satisfied.

My tutor had cautioned me against the tricks of gamesters, and the impression made upon my mind was not yet obliterated. I doubted my skill, and was careful of my purse. I had not as yet imbibed a sufficiently high opinion of my own infallibility, to

imagine that I equalled in science, those who had devoted a life to the pursuit, and had attained the rank of veteran professors. It was in vain I was complimented upon my skill and judgment. I was proof to every thing but Villiers, and prided myself on the fortitude with which I resisted all the attacks which were levelled against me. I began to think that I was beyond the reach of deception. In all this I was applauded and encouraged by Villiers, who was unwilling that any one should share with him in my property without a valuable consideration. Villiers occasionally wished me to try my skill against particular persons. I sometimes won a little, and the next time lost a great deal. He was sometimes obliged to repress my ardour by warning me of my prudent resolutions, and sometimes he permitted it to burn out in the natural way.

That is, when I became too tired to proceed any farther.

As my title and fortune gained me an easy admittance into the first circles of fashion, the knowledge that my stock of ready money was by no means confined, made me a welcome visitor in the highest society the country afforded, and as Villiers was my constant companion, without whom I never stirred an inch, he was admitted likewise. My caution for a long time protected me from every incitement; but one unlucky evening, after a copious libation at ——— house where I was received for especial reasons upon a footing of familiar intimacy, the dice box was introduced, merely with a view of beguiling the time, until the hour of supper. We played for such trifles as were incapable of rousing my mind from the stupifying effects of the liquor I had drank. I felt myself drowsy, and I imagine that my

drowsiness ended in sleep, for the transactions which followed left no traces in my memory. On the following morning I tried to recollect with distinctness what had passed; but it was impractible. I had an idea that all was not right, and a confused notion that I had signed a draft on my bankers, but beyond that my powers of reminiscence wholly failed me.

I slept longer than usual, and on awaking, found Villiers by my side. He mentioned to me the extreme difficulty he had, in restraining me from ruining myself. I had been seized, he said, with an incomprehensible fervor, and might consider myself fortunate that he had at last succeeded in conveying me away, after I had signed a draft for Seventy Thousand Pounds.

"Seventy Thousand Pounds," exclaimed I, "impossible!"

"It is but too true."

"Fly instantly to the bankers and stop the payment of the draft!"

"Remember where you passed the evening."

"No matter! I have still been swindled—fly! you may yet be in time!

He went out—I hurried on my clothes, and in a state little short of absolute distraction, I hastened after him. But although terror at the loss which I either had or was about to sustain, had lent wings to increase my speed, I arrived at the banking house too late; the bearer of the draft having received the amount of it only five minutes previous to my arrival. Villiers had had the start of me, but he did not reach the banking-house until I had been there some seconds; but I attributed this delay to my superior haste. He had not the same motives for dispatch, which actuated me; and judging of his feelings by my own, I supposed

he dreaded that my loss was past recovery.

I desired to see the draft. It was put into my hands. The signature was unquestionably mine, but the remainder of the writing was of a character to which I was a total stranger.

Villiers declared it to be the writing of the Honourable Robert Carlingford, who had formed one of the party on the preceding evening.

I enquired if it was usual to pay drafts of such a large amount, without receiving a previous notice.

They acknowledged that they had hesitated for a time, but as it was presented for payment by a person whom they knew to be of undoubted respectability, they paid it without scruple; particularly as my instructions were, they told me, of that positive nature, which did not leave them the power of dishonouring a draft, be

the amount what it would, so long as they had within themselves sufficient assets to meet it.

My loss was now past redemption. My denial of having played to that amount was of no avail. Villiers pleaded, that in proportion, he was no better off than myself, having lost all the cash that he could justly consider his own. I reasoned with myself, that had there been any unfair dealings, Villiers was as likely to be a victim as I was; and as I could not suppose that personages of such distinguished rank would enter into a collusion with a man in his situation, I acquitted him of all blame in the transaction. Swindled I certainly was, and nothing could obliterate the impression from my mind. The party consisted of only four, besides Villiers and myself. I separately applied to each, and each confirmed the truth of the statement.

Submission to my lot was all that was left me. Redress was vain. To have doubted the *honour* of any of the party would have been worse than sacrilege, for the doubt must have extended to the whole. I know not how in *honour* I could have resisted the payment of the draft. It was a debt of *honour* to all intents and purposes, although nothing will ever make me alter the opinion I then entertained of the business.

By the evening, as I had not recovered that tone of mind which would enable me to appear in company with my customary *nonchalance*, I strolled to the theatre. The play was the " Beggar's Opera," and I chanced to enter the house as Macheath was singing:—

" Since laws were made for every degree
" To curb vice in others as well as in me,
" I wonder we have not better company,
" Upon Tyburn Tree."

I turned round significantly to Villiers.—He comprehended my meaning, shrugged up his shoulders, and turned pale. What the last was for, I could not tell, but I placed the turning pale to inward rage at the treatment I had experienced.

However, I solemnly foreswore gaming, notwithstanding Villiers argued the rashness, not to say wickedness of resorting to oaths on petty occasions, and I have never since swerved from my resolution. In the end, I have, perhaps, been a gainer; for had it not been for some very striking occurrence, I might have lost more in smaller amounts than I was——of, in a large one; and at the same time might have acquired an irresistible attachment to the dice box.

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# CHAP. IX.

## *REFLECTION.*

THE severe lesson I had just met with, threw me into a serious train of reflection. Hitherto pleasure had been my business; it was my sole occupation, and it was the chief study of the day, when I was not actually employed in a pursuit which afforded gratification, to lay plans for consuming the morrow. For the future I had no thought. My hand at the bottom of a draft placed nothing beyond my reach which money could purchase; and what is there, save honour, virtue, and happiness,

which gold cannot procure. Of *honour*, in the common acceptation of the word, I was heartily sick. If it had any meaning at all, it was one disgraceful to the user. As to its real import I was still ignorant. I had defrauded no one by falshood and misrepresentation; I had debauched no man's wife; and I was free from murder sanctified with the appellation of an affair of *honour*.

He that is unacquainted with the horrors of remorse, the stings of vice, and the pangs of misery, is apt to consider himself in the possession of both virtue and happiness, and to regard the finespun theories of our ethical writers upon those subjects, as chimeras which originate in fancy, and which are dissipated by observations on real life. To the patient who is labouring under acute bodily sufferings, the absence of pain is a cause of pleasure; and to the individual whose amusements are alone derived from external objects, the ab-

sence of pleasure is the cause of pain. The man whose conscience is not so loaded with criminality as to become oppressive, will be sure to look upon himself as possessed of virtue, while a closer insight into his own breast will lay open to him a host of imperfections.

Dissatisfaction with myself was the consequence of reflection. I had consumed weeks and months in thoughtless dissipation, and could recal no single image upon which my mind could dwell with satisfaction. The past was a perfect blank. I had rushed impetuously into the stream of folly. I had suffered myself to be carried away by the current, and when by the expanding banks and regular bottom its force became less rapid, at least, by the cessation of novelty, less rapid in imagination, I discovered that the vapidity of the future left before me nothing to desire—nothing to enjoy.

For the first time in my life I ventured to encroach so far upon my amusements as to look into the state of my affairs. The sum total of my present personal property was put into my hands by Mr. Crack, the Banker, and to my astonishment I found, that with the purchase of my house, the cost of my stud of horses, the expence of my living, and my recent heavy loss, with a variety of *et cæteras*, too numerous to mention, including loans to such of my *particular friends* as, like my Lord Cullymore, did me the *honour* of referring their wants to my *supposed* inexhaustible purse, my funded property and ready money had dwindled down to less than forty thousand pounds. Out of this comparative pittance, I had to pay no small sum to my coachmaker; a very large one to my wine-merchant; an equal if not a larger amount to my upholsterer: besides my tailor, harness-maker, &c. &c.

which my dignity did not permit to be disproportioned to the other part of my expenditure.

How this enormous sum was wasted away, I can form no sort of idea. I found that there was my own draft for every item. I examined the checks again and again, but could neither discover an error in them, nor in the banker's accounts. It is true I seldom looked at any draft I signed; they were prepared by Villiers for such sums as *he* thought necessary. His usual way was to produce his book of accounts for examination, saying that every thing which passed through his hands was regularly minuted, and expressing a desire that I would acknowledge their correctness as we went on. This I generally did by signing the book and the check at the same time, without looking at either, beyond the space occupied by my hand-writing. The result of all my enquiries amounted simply to this,

that the residue of my cash and funded property would not do much more than satisfy the outstanding demands against me.

Thus within less than six months I had squandered, for I cannot say spent, little short of two hundred thousand pounds. My mind is still bewildered with the recollection. The wise Commons of England were certainly justified in their conclusion that ten hundred thousand pounds sounded considerably more than a million, labouring as they did under the apprehension that what was expressed in so short a term as a million would be as *shortly* regarded by the sovereign to whom it was granted. Thousands and tens of thousands had been so familiarized to my imagination that they excited less interest than a pound does with me at the present moment.

Until the fatal night at —— house, my loses at play had been trivial, too

trivial at least to form a leading feature in the general amount, and perhaps not beyond what I should have expended in other amusements. I had been balked in my endeavours to waste much on a woman, and had not therefore to provide an extravagant mistress with black boys and silver tea kettles, diamond necklaces and pink noyau, lace veils and ortalons. With the mere expences of eating and drinking few fortunes are injured; the scattering of my property, therefore, still remained a perfect enigma.

At all events retrenchment was indispensable. My fortune could no longer support the style of living I had adopted. I suspected unfair treatment *somewhere*. The amount of my *friend's* gains the reader may perhaps estimate, for as to myself I am both loth and unable to attempt it.

The high opinion I had hitherto entertained of the integrity of Villiers was

shaken but not destroyed. He did not appear to justify my former opinion of his steadiness, and I could call to mind some sneering expressions which had been made use of in his presence, which he had suffered to pass unnoticed. They were of such a nature as a man of *honour* would not have disregarded, and I was reluctantly obliged to confess that my bosom friend and companion was not a man of *modern honour*; in plain English that he wanted courage to be shot at. Such is the bad habit of early associations, that I had some how inseparably combined the ideas of honour and honesty, and I had not exactly separated *real* honour from *modern* honour. The consequence was natural, and such as might be expected from an inexperienced reasoner; I concluded my friend to be deficient in both. But as I could neither directly nor indirectly bring any point home to him, without exposing myself, I made the best of my situation.

I was now, however, in reality, careful and suspicious, but in cases like mine these are synonimous terms.

The reflection that I had squandered away an immense sum, which would have been in great measure, the means of preserving my father's honour, and of course the honour of my family, discomposed me not a little. But as it was totally foreign to my nature to make concessions, to court-regard, or to own myself mistaken, my father never had the satisfaction of knowing how much my inclinations led towards a reconciliation with him. This however is an acknowledgment, by the bye, and given at a time when I have no one to rejoice at my abandoning an error, or to reproach me with persevering in a hasty impression. A reconciliation however, would have been of little service to my father at that time, for I had no longer the means of assisting him, and I was firmly resolved not to

dismember the Erpingham estates.' But as I was thoroughly sick of myself and of every thing about me, I verily believe that had the intervention of some kind friend brought us once more together, such an event might have given a total change to my character, and saved me from numberless miseries hereafter.

To avoid sinking under a depression of spirits which I found fast growing upon me, I tried the effects of a change of scene, and following the usual routine of fashion, I devoted the hot summer months to an excursion along the southern coast, having in the first instance, previous to my leaving London, discharged all the domestics that were superfluous in the style of living which I intended to adopt. Villiers as usual accompanied me, but it was evident to both that the tie which had held us was considerably weakened, and that it wanted but a little to destroy it entirely. Had my real inclination been known to

Giles I doubt not I should have been spared much subsequent uneasiness. But the poor fellow had been so often witness to my blind infatuation, and had moreover seen the excessive tyranny which Villiers exerted towards the servants, discharging with ignominy such as he had the slightest reason to suspect inimical to his interest, that he had given me up as a lost man. He had formerly made some attempts to induce me to look with my own eyes, but the reception his suggestions invariably met with, were such, that I wonder he ever had the courage to repeat them.

Some writer has compared the eyes of menial dependants to those of a lynx, and says, that they are the first to discover a decline in the favourite's influence. He may be right: but as there is allowed to be no general rule without an exception, not even, as Sterne observes, in a man being present in the

shaving his own beard, I certainly found an exception in this instance, and this is not the only case in which I have found my mind and body actuated by feelings and impressions different from the bulk of mankind. I was too proud to let it be seen that I associated with a person whom I either disliked or suspected. In the presence, therefore, of others, a common observer could not have perceived any sensible alteration; on the contrary he might have considered, from an extra portion of civility and attention, that the power of the favourite had not yet reached its zenith, but was still upon the advance. It was sufficient that our shyness and reserve in private was convincing to ourselves that my state of pupillage was at an end.

I cannot accuse myself of an affectation of singularity, nor of actually possessing that qualification. Hundreds aim at it with the utmost eagerness, but

I could never discover any charm in being different from the rest of mankind, and I always thought it an infallible proof of an empty inside when all the wit was confined to the outside. On a review of my life, however, there is one point in which I sincerely trust that I stand alone: I never appear to have acted in any one instance from a principle of conscious rectitude, nor has any one act of my own, from the day of my birth to the present time, tended to my advantage either in the improvement or the satisfaction of my mind.

Villiers adroitly kept up the appearance of his influence, in which he was no less assisted by what I have just observed, than by my natural indolence. I still submitted to be the passive tool of my companion, inwardly hoping that some happy incident or other would release me from my thraldom.

In this manner several weeks elapsed in hurrying from place to place; and

but for the recollection of my extravagance and recent losses, I might be said to have experienced in an intolerable degree " the wants of him that wants nothing."

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## CHAP. X.

### *THE RENT DAY.*

AS it is not my intention that "Some Account of Myself," should rival an Itinerary, and contain "some account of the watering places which I visited in the course of my tour, I shall only observe of them, that they are so many places of dissipation, where the vices and follies of the metropolis are practised on a minor scale, in the regions of peace and quietness. It would I know, have made a much better close to the sentence if I had said innocence and tranquillity, but unfortunately as

far as my observations have extended, country innocence is pretty much upon a par with country ignorance, and country tranquillity with the want of opportunity to make a noise. In London. sins may be committed with comparative impunity, and are easily compounded for by *faith* or *election*, both of which are, by the bye, comfortable doctrines to determined backsliders; but in the country there is a necessity for comparative goodness, as far as outward appearance goes, if a person is at all desirous of the countenance of his neighbours. If he is not virtuous he must seem so, and that with the majority of mankind will answer every purpose.

In this way, however, I passed the time until the fashionable commencement, not the real commencement, of the sporting season, when custom has prescribed a residence at the country mansion to those who have one, and a

life of obscurity to such as are not so provided. In the true spirit of contradiction, when Nature is about to strip the country of her brightest ornaments, imperious fashion dispatches her votaries there, to consume the vacant interval until her reign again commences in the now deserted capital. I reluctantly followed the usual routine, and made my way towards Bingwood; not that I should have been in want of company had I chosen to accept a tenth part of the invitations which were made to me on both sides of the question. That is, on one side, those who invited me to their houses, and on the other side, those who kindly invited themselves to mine. The Honourable Gregory Gosling attacked me with a double edged sword; for tired of pressing me to Gander Hall, he insisted that we should spend the autumn together, and if I would not accompany him he would accompany me. I got out of this scrape

by telling him in confidence that I was going into the country for the express purpose of studying the statutes at large and the parliamentary history, preparatory to my occupying an ostensible post he might guess where. This had the desired effect, and Gosling was contented with expressing his heartfelt sorrow that I was about to enter the field of ambition.

The fact was, I was out of humour with myself. I had particular views to be accomplished, and did not wish that my actions should be witnessed, or that I should be exposed to the necessity of providing entertainment for others, when I stood so much in need of it myself. I certainly looked forward to a residence at Bingwood with a feeling almost amounting to abhorrence, but I was determined not to be diverted from my intention. Possibly a part of the dislike I felt was occasioned by my having passed only

one season in the busy world, and although a good deal disgusted, not yet completely sickened with its gaieties, and allurements. It is, however, certain, that Ovid could not have deplored his exile more bitterly than I did my voluntary banishment. Not that I regretted the loss of society, for I entered into none that excited the slightest degree of interest in my breast. I had moreover paid very severely for my introduction to the first circles. But in London there is that constant succession of novelty, which cannot fail of being pleasing to a youthful mind. There is such complete occupation for a head but slenderly provided with the materials for thinking. To crown the whole, there is an independence of thought and action to be obtained there, which no other part of the kingdom can bestow. Every man, there, appears too much occupied with his own concerns to regard those of his

neighbour. The sensible man will meet with a companion, and the fool will meet with brethren to keep him in countenance. The vicious may revel in secret, and the unostentatiously virtuous have ample scope for the indulgence of amiable propensities.

My sensations on my arrival at Bingwood were such as I had anticipated. My youth had never been remarkable for cheerfulness, and the strong contrast between my last leaving it, in the full possession of my property, and my present arrival after squandering so large a portion, strongly affected me.

My intercourse with Villiers was now fast drawing towards a conclusion. Although I felt that I could not much longer keep my dislike a secret, I continued at first to behave as usual, fearing to lessen myself in the estimation of my tenants if I acted in such a way as would reflect on the character of the man I had so highly praised.

In the openness of my heart and in the fullness of my joy, I had promised the tenants, that they should always have half a year's rent in arrear. The ensuing rent day, then, was the first in which Villiers was to officiate in his promised office of steward. I had resolved within myself, that it should be the last.

My income was still a noble one, and was unincumbered. My personal property was still amply sufficient to answer every demand against me. Time, therefore, would have reconciled me to my losses, and it is possible that had not fresh vexations awaited me, I might even have become an optimist, and have believed that the early visitation I had experienced, was meant to call me to a sense of prudence.

A short time previous to the rent day, while Villiers was preparing for his new occupation, I took a morning's ride, attended only by Giles. I had no

sooner left the verge of the park than my attendant rode up to my side, and requesting my pardon, put three letters into my hand. He then prepared to leave me. On looking at the direction I found that they were addressed to Villiers.

I desired to know why he had taken the liberty of prying into Mr. Villiers' concerns, and angrily commanded him to replace the letters where he had found them.

I had been in the habit of delivering my orders in a manner so peremptory, as admitted of no reply. Giles tremblingly took them, but I heard him mutter to himself that he hoped I should find out the rascal yet.

For the present I was contentedly the dupe of Villiers, but I could not bear the idea of being a laughing stock to my servants. Haughty and overbearing as I was in general, I had treated Giles in a way more approaching to familiarity than the other ser-

vants. I had formerly, when a child, treated him as my equal; and I always remembered that we had sucked from the same breast. After a conflict between pride and curiosity, I found the latter predominate. Calling to Giles, I requested to know how these letters had come into his possession, and why he had put them into my hand.

He told me that the Game-keeper had observed Peters several times lurking about Thrift Wood, and that very early one morning he himself had followed Villiers to the same place, where Peters was in waiting for him. He could not, he said, get near enough to hear the coversation, but by the gestures of Peters he appeared to be threatening the other. The letters which he gave me, he had picked up in Villiers' bed chamber, and having a great personal dislike to him, as well as believing him to be a great rascal, he had been tempted to read the contents,

which he thought of too much importance to be concealed from me.

Thus circumstanced, I thought myself justified in infringing the rules of confidence. The letters were as follows:—

"Mr. Villiers,

"You have not fulfilled your promise. I don't like to threaten, but by the living G—d, if every thing is not directly settled, I'll blow all.

W. Peters."

"I shall be at Thrift Wood at four."

The second was apparently from a town accomplice.

Dear V.

"M—— is beginning to squeak about the —— house job. They have used him no better than they did you—Make the best of your time—If you can finger the rents do—You can make your way to the old place.

T. ——."

The third was from my Coachmaker.

"Dear Sir,

"We inclose you a draft for a thousand pounds, at two months after date, payable to your order. We have in this instance complied with your desire, relying upon your promise of procuring an early settlement of our account. This we are the more anxious for, as we understand Lord W. has undergone a complete sweating, and that money is getting low. We beg to say, that on any subsequent order we cannot afford so large a commission as thirty per cent, unless we can feel thoroughly assured of a speedy payment.

We are, Dear Sir,

Your obliged humble Servants,

T. and G. PERCHPOLE."

These letters left no further room for conjecture, I had no time to lose. Detection, with these proofs would be easy, but I still wished to avoid the appearance of having been so miserably

duped. Giles knew the contents of the letters: reserve towards him was therefore unnecessary. I confided to him, the line of conduct I intended to adopt in getting rid of the scorpion I had fostered, and desired him, when the rent day arrived, on no consideration to quit Villiers for an instant. If he appeared in the least inclined to decamp to detain him forcibly, trusting to me to take care of the consequences. I intended myself to take care of the money at the close of the day. In this way I felt perfectly secure.

On our return we found Villiers making enquiries among the servants for some letters which he imagined he had dropped somewhere about the house, but none could give him any satisfactory intelligence. His state of uneasiness was visible to every one. As Giles entered he renewed his enquiries. The bungling manner in which

Giles, who was a thoroughbred advocate for truth in serious matters, denied having any knowledge of them, tended to create a suspicion in the mind of the questioner that concealment was no longer possible. I restrained my feelings, and in endeavouring to hide them, even paid the rascal a double degree of attention. Probably he discovered what was passing within me, by my overplaying my part, for he was too well acquainted with my temper to be deceived.

The rent day arrived—my tenants were all of them punctual. Indeed the indulgence they had received would have rendered a non-attendance inexcusable. Giles stuck to his post with indefatigable attention, and I dare say during the whole of the operation never took his eyes from the Steward's motions. I went into the room two or three times, under pretence of showing myself to the farmers, and was satisfied that Villiers was sensible of his being

closely watched, but there was no symptom of discomposure.

At the close of the day, I took my seat at the table, to the evident astonishment of my steward. I therefore imagined I had completely frustrated any plans he might have formed. But I was mistaken. The proverb of "Set a thief to catch a thief," is corret to the spirit and to the letter. I could only contemplate straight forward proceedings, and was wholly ignorant of the subterfuges of villainy. A police officer, judging from himself and his former practices, might have detected his brother rogue, but I defy any man who has held Hockley in the Hole and its practices in abhorrence, to have guarded against the deception which duped me in spite of my care and circumspection.

"My Lord," said the steward, at the conclusion of the business, with a countenance of the utmost coolness,

"your lordship will here find the full amount of your half yearly rents. I have been hurried, but probably you will have the kindness to assist me in counting the money."——

Unlike my former self, and as I foolishly imagined to the annoyance of Villiers, I reckoned up the whole amount. Every thing was correct. The money was laid before me, and I applauded myself for my prudence and penetration. I could now seize the first pretext for getting rid of Villiers, and time was allowed me to invent excuses for his dismissal. To avoid the charge of irritability, I determined to lay the separation upon him, and to say that he left me to advance himself. Once away from me, he immediately became an indifferent person, in whom I could not be expected to take any particular interest. If he chose to assume the character of a gentleman, I knew the sums he had obtained from me would enable

him to do so, and for my own sake, I should keep his secret, as there was nothing I dreaded more than an exposure of my folly and weak infatuation.

"The notes, my Lord," observed Villiers, "I perceive are almost entirely provincial, I should therefore recommend your lordship to forward them without loss of time to your London bankers, lest on any of them proving fictitious you make yourself answerable. The gold had better be sent likewise. If your Lordship will allow me I will fold them up and direct them to Mess. Diddle, Crack, and Co. They will be aware what is necessary to be done. You may dispatch the parcel to town as you think proper, but I think the sooner the better."

The advice was too good to be rejected. Paper, string, and wax were brought,—I saw the parcel properly

folded, directed, tied and sealed,—every thing was as I could have wished it.

" And now, my Lord," said Villiers, " it is necessary for me to vindicate my own character, which it is too evident, although I am ignorant of the cause, has suffered materially in your estimation. But what I have to say is for your own ear. There is *now* no occasion for a witness."

I desired that the room might be cleared. Giles, in pursuance of his directions, seemed inclined to remain in his post. He appeared as if he wished to speak with me. I rose from my seat, and angrily desired him to withdraw. The better to shew my confidence, I went to the door as if to see that there were no listeners.

On my return to the table I desired him to proceed, at the same time putting the parcel in my coat pocket.

" My Lord Winterbourne, I can no longer be blind to the opinion you

have very unjustly formed of me. I assume that as a fact, as it will be the means of saving unnecessary words. I have hitherto discharged a pleasing duty. That duty now ceases—from this moment I consider myself as released from all further cares on your account. You will in time discover how much you have been mistaken in the man before you. Your behaviour for some time has ceased to be equivocal, but for the sake of consistency I restrained my own feelings, and fulfilled the duties I undertook from the purest motives, at our first acquaintance. To-morrow, my Lord, will see us perfect strangers. Your welfare will always be dear to me. But you, my Lord, would be degraded in associating with the man you suspected. On the other hand, I should degrade myself in my own estimation if I continued to receive favours from that person who no longer considered me worthy of his confidence."

Here he paused. Our evening was passed under mutual restraint, and was terminated as soon as our usual custom would permit. We both seemed heartily tired of each other, and gladly separated. With me self approbation acted as a narcotic potion. I was quietly rid of an irksome companion, and fell asleep in the act of building castles in the air for my future habitation.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *THE SPUNGING HOUSE.*

HAPPY in the thought of being again in the possession of personal independence, my waking dreams were delightful. The world was now before me, I could choose my company, and when weary I could return to privacy, or resort to others with whom I could again feel an interest. If I were desirous of making the horrors of my late situation comprehensible, it would be quite sufficient to refer the inquisitive reader to such of his acquaintance as have saddled themselves with a

companion, on whom they have become dependent. Contracted indeed must be the circle in which a person moves, who has not an opportunity of witnessing the evil I have pointed out. I hailed my newly acquired liberty with heartfelt satisfaction, and in ruminating on the blessings before me, I indulged myself on my downy couch rather later than usual. I dressed myself deliberately and prepared to meet my *friend* for the last time. Before I left my dressing room I inquired for Mr. Villiers. My *gentleman* returned in a few minutes with the information that the bed in which Mr. Villiers usually slept, had been the preceding night unoccupied, and that the window which was but a short distance from the ground was wide open.

I mechanically felt in my coat pocket for the packet and found it perfectly safe. Astonished at this ex-

traordinary circumstance I endeavoured to get some further explanation, and for that purpose sent the servants in all directions. In this I was completely unsuccessful. The door of the principal stable was locked, and the groom no where to be found. But this I did not consider as remarkable, as being careful of my horses I had desired him, when he took any of them out to exercise to lock the door, that no mischief might happen in his absence.

I can hardly recollect what my inducement was, but I was tempted to open the packet of money before I sent it to the coach. My consternation may be more easily conceived than described, when I discovered, that instead of the parcel in which I had seen the notes and gold safely deposited, I held in my hand one of an appearance exactly similar on the outside, but containing but a pair of my own

old shoes with the heals cut off, and a large piece of lead.

My rage knew no bounds. To have revenged myself of the scoundrel who had thus put the finishing stroke to his villainy, I could have almost waded through a sea of blood. To be again duped in defiance of all my care, and in the face of all my suspicion—when I could not imagine the possibility even of being defrauded, was now more than I could well bear. But my rage was impotent; the rascal had placed himself out of the reach of my vengeance. If I endeavoured to follow him, and chanced to take the right road, he had at least ten hours the start of me; and I could easily fancy the rapidity with which guilt would fly. To overtake him was very improbable—his measures were evidently too well connected. His stay in England was not very likely; and he might as easily have reached Hull or Liverpool

as London. However, as the country would have now become worse than purgatory, I resolved to proceed to London with all possible expedition, in the hope, though with little expectation, of seizing and crushing the serpent who had stung me.

My journey was performed with incredible celerity, and I had the satisfaction, about midway between Bingwood and London, to meet with certain traces, which marked the route the fugitive had taken; for I painfully discovered two of my favourite horses completely knocked up. Their riders, which by the description were unquestionably Villiers and Peters, had passed on in a post-chaise only six hours previous to the coming up of myself and Giles, whom I had again made the companion of my journey.

It would have been utterly impossible for them to have reached town during the hours of business; I did

not, therefore, despair of ultimately succeeding in the chase. I could account for their being so much behind hand in their progress, either by the necessity they were under of resting the poor beasts by the way, or probably to avoid pursuit, they had taken a circuitous route. They must have travelled nearly seventy miles on the same horses, whereas Giles and myself had only ridden the first stage, and travelled the remainder in a postchaise and four. We were now, however, journeying upon a par in point of expedition, and I did not doubt that their exertions to avoid pursuit would be equal to ours to overtake them.

On my arrival in London, about eight o'clock in the morning, I lost no time in making the necessary depositions, and giving the proper descriptions at the mansion-house, and at the different police offices. I sent notice of the circumstances to the different banking-houses, desiring them

to stop any great quantity of the notes of some particular country banks, in case they were presented for payment under suspicious appearances. With all this trouble and vexation, I neglected the most important point; for I failed to make friends of the police officers in a *proper* manner. It is no wonder then, upon consideration, that I failed.

In the midst of our search I was suddenly seized by a couple of ruffian-looking men, who told me that I was their prisoner. It was in vain I endeavoured to convince them that they must have mistaken me for some other person—they seemed familiar with my name, and I could not certainly deny myself to be Viscount Winterbourne. They told me that they held a writ against me for no less a sum than ten thousand pounds. Satisfied that I owed nothing which I could not instantly command, and never having before seen any of these harpies, I said I would go with them to my

bankers, and that they should have every security they desired ; but that it was highly important I should not be interrupted at present. Their duty they said was imperative, and their responsibility heavy. They could not tell who was who ; a lord had slipped through their fingers last week, and had saddled them with a debt of thirteen pounds ten shillings and fourpence. They had lost so much, by taking peoples' word, that they had forsworn trusting to anybody again. They had a great respect for me, and had no doubt every thing was right ; but I must really excuse them if they insisted upon my accompanying them to some place of confinement.

Giles was preparing to decide the dispute according to the laws of pugilistic warfare. In the heat of the moment I might have seconded him, but on a sudden I found myself dragged into a narrow passage, and forced

within a strong grated door, which now separated me from my servant. I stormed, raved, and worked myself to a pitch of downright madness. In the heat of my phrenzy, I was almost incapable of articulating, much less of giving any rational directions, as to the steps to be taken for my release. Giles, who would have passed through fire and water to serve his master, was nearly in the same state. He kicked at the door, broke the windows, roared murder, and collected a crowd, which the bailiff harangued from the first floor, assuring them that what had been done was in the regular way of business. Giles, indeed, poor fellow, would have been equally at a loss had he retained the full possession of all his faculties, for he was ignorant of the names of my bankers, and of my former trustees, and these were the only persons to whom I could have applied at such an unhappy juncture.

Giles seeing that he could accomplish nothing for his master by force or violence, tried the art of persuasion, and by dint of begging, and the proof of quietness of disposition, prevailed on the people of the house to admit him. He tried every means in his power to pacify me; but the day was completely gone before I was sufficiently master of myself to send Giles to the banking-house of Messrs. Diddle, Crack and Co. He returned with the intelligence that the shop was closed;—that Mr. Diddle was on a shooting party in Norfolk;—Mr. Crack with the Leicestershire hunt; and of the remaining partners, one was gone to his country-house, and the other to one of the theatres, they could not say which. I then sent him to the trustees—the banker had been dead two days, and was now laying a corpse in the house; and Mr. Bearblock would not be in town till the following morning,

having been sent for in a hurry to make Lord Scrape's will.

In this miserable dilemma, I joined Diddle, Crack and Co. Bearblock and Lord Scrape, in one general anathema. Nothing could be done, and I was doomed to pass the night in this dreadful state of horror and uneasiness. The keeper of the house had listened attentively to Giles's account of the transaction; and as Giles knew my circumstances sufficiently to be certain that I could not really be in debt to any one, affected to suspect foul play, or at least professed to think that every thing was not as it should be. As it was his wish, he said, to oblige every body, and to promote the ends of justice, he recommended and offered to procure the advice and assistance of one of the greatest geniuses in the profession; which term, I afterwards understood to mean, the greatest rogue. The drowning man

catches at a straw; I therefore readily consented to consult with this real genius.

A few minutes brought before my eyes this redoubtable champion of the law, in the person of a man whose height did not certainly exceed four feet ten inches. The sun, at an angle of forty-five degrees, would have made but little difference in his shadow, whether he stood upon his legs or lay upon his back. A bloated red face was illuminated by two small grey eyes, which refused to act in concert with each other, and which were fixed rather above a something difficult to be described, that nature had placed in the centre of his face, between a low forehead spotted with carbuncles, and a wide mouth deprived of all its ivory ornaments. The protuberance, which served the purposes of a nose to snuffle and sneeze through, if it was like any thing, appeared most nearly to resemble

a piece of raw liver, shaped like a bruised potatoe.

This respectable-looking member of the legal profession was ushered into the room with the following elegant eulogium from the mouth of Mr. Holdfast, the keeper of the house.

" Charley's the boy, my Lord, and if so be as how you have been cribbed out of the regular vay, he'll make 'em all sweat for't, d——n me if he von't."

Mr. Holdfast closed this piece of eloquence by a slap on Charley's shoulder, which rather disturbed the lawyer's balance. The latter, I suppose, not approving of such familiarity in the presence of a lordly client, frowned upon his conductor, and addressed his discourse to me with—

" Pray, my Lord, at whose suit have you been arrested ?"

" That, Sir, I have yet to learn."

" Aye, aye," said the bailiff, "not

unlikely! I have known many get into limbo without being able to tell who put them there. But you can give us a little bit of a guess, mayhap, as to which of your creditors have nabbed you."

"Which of my creditors, Sir? I have no creditors."

"Do you owe nothing then?" asked the lawyer.

"Nothing but what could have been discharged long before this, had I been possessed of the liberty of so doing."

"D——d uncivil though, to a Lord," observed the bailiff. "Such rogues, my Lord, ought to cross the vater, and replenish the plantations."

"Holdfast!" cried the lawyer, "bring the copy of the writ."

Mr. Holdfast went down stairs for his authority for the detention; and during his absence, Charley, for at that time I knew the lawyer by no other name, made several remarks upon the

rascality of attornies in general, and congratulated me on falling into the hands of an honest man.

The copy of the writ was produced, and I found myself in custody at the suit of one Charles Villiers, for a debt of ten thousand pounds and upwards! My rage, and with it my phrenzy, returned in full force.

"This," I exclaimed," is our boasted land of liberty. And yet any scoundrel can imprison another whom he is swindling, with the dread of no other punishments than attends the usual consequences of perjury. He may defeat his pursuer at the moment he is about to be rendered up to justice; and thus, with impunity, gain time to escape, and carry off the fruits of his crimes."

There was no need of further explanation. I had been defeated on every point, and nothing but personal liberty could be of use to me. I told the bailiff of the rascality of the trans-

action—explained to him how I had been treated—appealed to his feelings—threw myself upon his liberality—called upon Charley to plead my cause; and, in short, tried every figure of rhetoric in every possible way. I wished him to let one of his men attend me, declaring, on my *honour*, that I would not attempt to escape; and that I would certainly return. But my words were only like the gentle zephyrs, which fan the foliage without disturbing a leaf. Mr. Holdfast was proof against entreaty, and deaf to persuasion. The sum, he said, would ruin him. His letting me out might make him liable to an escape. His feelings were much hurt at refusing me, and he should be happy to serve me in what laid in his power. If I had any one to arrest, or the like of that, I should know what he was.

Charley, with a grin, observed that I knew what he was already. Mr.

Holdfast smiled at his friend's jest, but declared that he could on no account consent to my leaving his house, for any place but Newgate or the Bench, without having a sufficient security. It was a hard case, he allowed, but he must attend to his wife and family, and could run no risks. If I only saw Mrs. Holdfast and his little babes, vho were now at his villa at Kentish Town, I should not wonder at his being so careful for their sakes, protesting, at the same time, that if he were a single man, he would follow me to the world's end to punish such rascality.

"But as a man of honour, Mr. Holdfast!"

"As to honour, my lord, vhy you knows between ourselves that's a bit of smoke. I've had one taste, and I'm in no hurry for another. I lost eleven pounds two shillings and a penny by taking the honour of the

Honourable and Reverend Adolphus Cully, about two years ago.

I cast my eyes upon the bailiff as he mentioned the name of my friend, but as I did not break in upon the thread of his discourse, he continued:

"Besides, my Lord, here's Charley can tell you that nothing can be done to-night. There are regular forms in all these here cases.'

"Forms," cried I, "to secure a robber!"

"Vhy to be sure, that's a different kind of a thing, but I don't think he'll be got far before to-morrow. It's a a bad night for travelling, and I dare say he vont get out of London. The evenings are dark, and getting devilish cold. Mayhap a bowl of punch vont be amiss."

"His Lordship," said the lawyer, "can do nothing in any case at this late hour."

Of this he endeavoured to convince

me, by an unintelligible jargon, which lasted upwards of a quarter of an hour. It was about to close when Mr. Holdfast returned with the punch. Without ceremony my two friends drew their chairs by the fire, and helped themselves to bumpers, wishing me better times.

In the agitation I was in, I followed their example hardly knowing what I was about. I had never been in the habit of using spirituous liquors; a little therefore mounted into my head, and finding that it produced a species of forgetfulness, I indulged myself in frequent visits to the bowl.

I am ashamed to say that the little reason my situation had left me was driven away by intoxication. However, the fatigue and the punch, between them made me sleep sound. In the morning, Giles again posted to Pall Mall, and by the time I was thoroughly awake he returned

accompanied by one of the partners of the banking house. The banker proposed the immediate payment of the debt to prevent a further waste of money in expences. I told him that it was a false arrest, and that I did not owe the person who arrested me a single shilling.

He was ready to bail me, but Mr. Holdfast threw a fresh obstacle in the way of my liberation, and insisted upon two securities. In a little time a second was procured, and I once more obtained my freedom, but it was only to learn fresh disasters.

I did not lose a moment in recommencing my search after Villiers, in which I now *properly* procured the assistance of the police officers. But all traces had disappeared. I had no doubt, that in the interval of my confinement he had completely effected his escape beyond the possibility of retaking him, and that he had manag-

ed to transfer his ill-gotten wealth either to the Continent or to America.

Hurt as I was in mind and purse, my cup of bitterness was only to the brim; it had not yet overflowed. Villiers had told me I had yet to know him, for I had still to learn the full extent of his villany. After having put all the police officers I could meet with upon the scent, I called at my Bankers, and there learnt that on the preceding day, a draft had been presented by Villiers himself for fourteen thousand pounds, which, knowing the confidence I had reposed in him, and not aware of any change in my sentiments, was regularly honoured.

I was positive I had never drawn such a draft, nor had I ever put him in possession of a blank check. The signature, however, was unquestionably my own, and on futher examination proved, by certain marks on the paper which I well recollected, and by its

being strongly perfumed with otto of roses, to be the *carte blanche* which I had instructed Villiers to offer to the lady whom I had known under the name of Miss Emma Henderson!

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# CHAP XII.

## *SERIOUSNESS.*

THE mixture of horrible passions which agitated me at this discovery, and the feelings by which I was almost overwhelmed, I cannot pretend at so distant a period to describe. I had, at all events, the satisfaction of now knowing the worst, for it was not possible for Villiers to have inflicted any further injuries. I had been attacked and defeated on every vulnerable point. In my rage I vowed vengeance against all mankind, and as long as the humour continued, fancied myself a mis-

anthrope. By degrees the humour subsided, and I discovered that man was not born to be alone. My reflections were painful in the extreme and I had no person with whom I could communicate. My acquaintance had been hitherto confined to the empty and frivolous, and from them, instead of consolation, I could only expect sneers and taunts.

It was well my mind was occupied with something, for I did not yet entirely relinquish the idea of bringing Villiers to justice, although my hopes were tempered with fears that his plans had been too cautiously laid for me to be successful. The state of my own mind and body prevented me from pursuing the fugitive in person, but I dispatched police officers in all directions. After a few days, I learnt that he had embarked at Yarmouth, not above half an hour previous to the arrival of the officers. I did not suspect

the truth of this intelligence, as nearly about the same time, a letter with the Yarmouth post mark, in the hand writing of the scoundrel, was addressed for me to the care of Messrs. Diddle, Crack and Co. with a desire that it might be immediately forwarded to me. It contained an apology for my being locked up, which was an act of necessity, and not of choice. The letter closed with advising me as a *friend* not to incur unnecessary expenses, as what he had written must convince me that pursuit was useless.

My chagrin was not much diminished by the knowledge that my prey had escaped from me, and I could not help suspecting that the officers had permitted him to embark for reasons best known to themselves. It vexed me to miss my hold of him by such a trifling difference of time. I did not consider that the scent of a slough hound was not keener than that of a Bow

Street runner, but the probability of their choosing to secure their prisoner would depend on the prospect of gain, which these gentlemen of *honour* would duly weigh and well consider. Villiers had every thing at stake, and could afford to bribe high; I had left the great reward to be settled hereafter. As punishment was my object, full as much, if not more than the recovery of my property, I regretted that I had not offered the moiety of what might be regained, or even the whole, to have glutted my spirit of revenge. In this I should have acted wisely, for I lost the whole as it was.

The money which had fallen into the hands of Villiers was now irrevocably gone. I was thus deprived of my rents which I had set apart for my subsistence, and had lost the whole amount of the cash lying in my bankers hands. From the experience of the past, I felt the absolute neces-

sity of immediate retrenchment. I decided on giving up my town establishment *in toto*, and considerably reducing that at Bingwood. Embarrassment stared me in the face, for I doubted whether my personal property of every description would now discharge my outstanding debts. At all events there would be nothing left to provide for my expences until the next rent day.

I determined without loss of time to call in the aid of an efficient person for the purpose of ascertaining my actual situation, and to adopt some prudent mode of living for the future. I first thought of Mr. Bearblock, and conceived that having been many years the confidential adviser of my mothers family, he would take a real interest in my welfare. But I soon discarded that idea; satisfied that my state of irritation would but ill accord with his habitual brutality. I was as little

capable of bearing reproaches as he was of refraining from the use of them.

The next plan which suggested itself, was to apply for the recommendation of my bankers to some eminent man of the law, in whom I could place a perfect reliance, and who would afford me the requisite assistance, in acting for the present, and advising for the future, and who would, at the same time avoid recurring to the past. They spoke of Mr. Charles Nalder of Lincoln's Inn, in terms of the most unqualified praise. He was, they said, a man of the first respectability, unshaken integrity, and possessed of an independent fortune acquired by his profession. But what was still better, he was a complete man of business.

I immediately applied at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and was informed that Mr. Nalder had been thrown from his horse a few days before, and

was confined for the present at his country seat at Shenfield, about fourteen miles from London.

Anxious to suffer as little delay as possible, I requested the bankers to apprize Mr. Nalder of the nature of my business, and of my intention of seeing him at Shenfield on the following day, which unfortunately happened to be Sunday. I was directed to a pretty looking house, newly fitted up in a style of comfort approaching to elegance, situated in a paddock of park like appearance. On my arrival I was ushered into a small study, from whence, after waiting about a quarter of an hour, I was conducted into a parlour, and introduced to a stout formed man, with a countenance marked with severity in every line He was lying on a sofa, apparently bruised in the leg, and on the forehead ; the latter being ornamented with a black patch, which did not add to the

beauty of his appearance. The harsh features of this man are at this moment completely before my eyes.

The symptoms of dislike which I felt rising in my breast were rather increased than diminished by his opening address.

"My Lord Winterbourne, I presume."

I bowed—

"My friends in Pall Mall have sent me a letter. I suppose I have the honour of seeing your Lordship on the business to which it alludes."

I had heard, I observed, of his accident, which I much regretted for his own sake, as well as for mine, but hoping that its effects were not of that serious nature which would deprive me of the pleasure of conversing with him, I would, if he were perfectly at leisure, explain to him the situation in which I was placed, partly by my own impru-

dence, and partly by the rascality of others.

"My Lord, you will excuse the interruption. This is a day expressly set part for the fulfilment of higher duties. It is one on which I would on no consideration suffer the present to interfere with the hereafter. Contrary, to my usual custom, I have received your Lordship, not being aware of the means by which I might have prevented your journey. I shall be gratified with your Lordship's remaining under my humble roof until to-morrow morning, when we will discourse of business as early as you please. I do not profess to be righteous over much, but I trust I know how to fulfil my duties on earth."

For a time I was puzzled whether to accept the invitation or to decline it; but as my dependence on Villiers had been hastily placed, I was not sorry to have the opportunity of becoming better

acquainted with the person on whom I was about to repose a confidence.

The hours never passed so heavily over my head as during the remaining part of this day. The *serious* portion of mankind had been totally unknown to me. Although I could not in myself lay much claim to religion I had never been guilty of interfering with the opinion of others. A Sunday evening's frolic, as it was termed, of kicking up a row at a meeting house, I always looked upon with horror, and I considered it but reasonable to allow to others the same latitude of thought which I assumed to myself. My view of society in this respect was liberal, and I had been always led to believe that cheerfulness to a moderate extent was perfectly compatible with the principles of religion and morality. But here every thing was sombre and gloomy. The whole family from the mistress, who in most cases is the head

of the house, down to the scullion whom I accidentally saw in the yard at my entrance, were all labouring under the apparent influence of a stiff neck. Every muscle in every face was contracted and drawn into such positions as bid defiance to the entrance of a smile, and all eyes were fixed to the ground with that inflexible steadiness as if death or something worse would be the inevitable consequence of looking up.

Giles, in the kitchen, was not in a much better plight than his master in the parlour, for on his offering the honours of a new acquaintance to the house maid, he had a serious lecture from the footman, which ended in the threat of appealing to the higher powers in case of a repetition of such outrageous conduct. The house maid, Giles said, did not seem to agree with all the doctines of the footman. The latter condemned the practice of salut-

ing generally, but the former observed that it was improper only on a Sunday. It was with some difficulty that Giles obtained a sop in the pan, and but for the interest made by the house maid in his favour, he might have longed in vain. Giles at night convinced me that the affairs of the kitchen were regulated by those of the parlour; but he declared that if he lived till the morning he would see what the footman and housemaid were both made of.

The dinner party consisted of the host and his wife, two grown up daughters, a son about three and twenty, the clergyman of the parish, and myself. A short time after the cloth was removed, the ladies retired. The father then directed his attention to his son, who appeared to have arrived in the course of the morning from a newly-taken farm. He had all the air of a would-be blood, and aped the manners

of a fox-hunter. He was continually practising the knowing whistle, and had made considerable progress towards perfection, but as it was always in an under tone, I could not correctly ascertain his proficiency.

"I hope, Richard," said the father, "that this is the last time you will break in upon the duties of the sabbath. I will excuse it now, and place your arrival here, to anxiety for my own health which has been a little shattered by my recent accident, and to your present unsettled state. But be cautious for the future."

"I am sure then, Sir," answered Richard, "that my visits here must be rare indeed, if I am to pay what you call proper attention to my farm. I wonder, Sir, you are so extremely scrupulous; for my own part I can see no more harm in travelling on a Sunday than on any other day. Do

you, Mr. Hampton?" addressing the clergyman.

"Boy be silent.—You will, I hope, one day do credit to my precept and example. Till then, let not my house be sullied with such scandalous notions. People, my Lord," addressing himself to me, "are apt to exaggerate. I have the character for great riches, and my son here, I am sorry to say it in his presence, is not without the disposition to dissipate what I have so laboriously collected together. But as to my riches the world will find itself mistaken. I have toiled hard, and brought up a large family to honour their Creator. My son, whom you see here, I have just established in a farm of seven hundred a year. I have completely stocked it with every possible requisite. This, Richard," turning to the young man, "is all you can expect from me. I have several other children, all equally deserving of my

care, and as far as I can calculate, the provision I have to bestow on each of them, if it amount to what I have advanced to you, will certainly not exceed it. You see, my Lord, unlike some fathers I put my children in the way of elevating themselves in the world before my death, instead of their having to wish to free themselves from my controul, and to share my property, Business I wish to decline; but if I did, I should, I think, be at times in want of amusement. A rational mind must have variety in its pursuits, and in following business I am satisfied that I am performing the duties of friendship towards those who have been already gainers by my professional assistance. But my comforts are centered in my family and in retirement. However, I must allow that occasional bustle gives greater zest to tranquillity."

A pause of some minutes now ensued, during which our worthy host, leaning back in his chair, fell into a profound sleep, the soundness of which could be ascertained by the snorings emitted from his nasal organs. The third snore was the signal that Mr. Nalder was firmly fixed in his afternoon's nap, which it seems was usually of two hours continuance. The young farmer immediately decamped to see his dogs and horses, which he could assure me were choice in their breeds and well worth looking at, if I would do him the honour to accompany him to the stable. I thought proper to decline the invitation, and Mr. Richard then left the clergyman and myself to entertain one another as we could.

I was fortunate in my decision, for the cheerful conversation of the parson made amends, in some measure for several hours passed in durance vile. He was a man of considerable attain-

ments, as far as a thoughtless being like myself can be allowed to judge. He had seen much and read much; and was in every sense of the word an entertaining companion. His religion was not clouded, like that of my host, with austerity, and his learning was wholly free from pedantry. He talked to amuse and not to shew the extent of his knowledge;—to instruct without assuming the dictatorial formality of a master.

The summons for tea again plunged me into irksomness, for so I denominated seriousness. Mr. Nalder awoke, and every thing was paralized. He slept again, but his slumbers were now broken. A word awoke him, and continuation of words running into sentences kept him from repose. Silence was the order of the day. Richard made his escape to his farm, and the parson to his home, leaving Lord Viscount Winterbourne to the exertion of his faculties to keep himself from gaping.

Never, in the whole course of my life, did I hail the hour of retiring to rest with such heartfelt satisfaction. Ten o'clock at last sounded, and the whole tribe of domestics, Giles into the bargain, with an undertaker's solemnity, entered the room to listen to the evening prayer, and to a long exhortation upon the duty of keeping the sabbath day holy, during which Giles's eyes were directed to the house maid. This ended, I cheerfully betook myself to rest.

The contrast between the gravity and steadiness of my new adviser, and the levity of my old associate, exhibited the former, maugre his seriousness, in a far preferable point of view than I should otherwise have placed him. I felt a little inclined to charge him with hypocrisy; but I reflected that God alone could judge the heart. At all events he had age and experience to direct me, and the respectability of his

character, as well as his situation in life, held out to me an assurance that my confidence would not be misplaced. Whatever dislike I entertained towards his manners, I rested satisfied that reliance might be placed on his integrity. My further communication would be on business, and it would be my own fault, if I did not steer clear of again trespassing on a Sunday.

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# CHAP. XIII.

*CONDOLENCE.*

I AROSE early, and found the whole family, the nominal head of it excepted, at their morning's devotion. Mr. Nalder was too great an invalid to attend the breakfast table. That I might be no incumbrance to the ladies, or interfere with their domestic occupations, (Mrs. Nalder having informed me that her daughters were patterns of notability, and would do credit to a husband in the highest station), I requested permission to view the pleasure grounds. It was kindly

kindly acceded to, and I esteemed myself fortunate that the rain in the night had made the new formed walks too wet to allow either of the Miss Nalders to accompany me. Every thing about me bore the marks of considerable labour and incalculable expence. Little as I then knew of rural economy, I could neither compliment the proprietor upon his taste or his prudence. But as I well knew there was no accounting for the freaks and vagaries of that capricious jade Fancy, and as I wished to entertain a high opinion of my host's judgement, I concluded that a park and pleasure grounds, formed upon a strong tenacious sour clay, was congenial to the temper and disposition of the owner.

On my return to the house I found Mr. Nalder ready to receive me. Before a person of such rigid principles I felt no small embarrassment in laying open my case. The marks of folly

were so indelibly stamped upon all my proceedings, that I trembled at the censure of so strict a moralist. I had squandered away an immense sum of money, and through my weakness I had been swindled of as much more. I had to bring myself to the painful confession, that in the course of a few months, I had made away with property and contracted debts to the amount of the whole savings of a minority commencing with my birth.

I was permitted to go on with my story without interruption. When I had ended, I requested the favour of his advice as to my future conduct; at the same time begging him to be as lenient as possible in any reference he might think necessary to make to the past.

"Advice, my Lord," said he, "is easily given, but is not so easily followed. I will spare your feelings, and make no comments upon what you

you have told me. It is to the future only that your attention should be fixed, unless it happen that you cast your eye upon the past, as a warning to avoid the recurrence of similar acts of imprudence."

My mind was relieved from a load, and I took courage to proceed.

"You are right, Sir," was my reply. "It is to the future only that I *can* look with pleasure. What steps do you recommend?"

"I can recommend nothing, until I feel satisfied of your inclination to adopt my suggestions. It is a common practice to ask the opinion of others, and then to act in diametrical opposition, on a previous determination. Excuse my freedom, my Lord."

"Your inference, I am sorry to say, Mr. Nalder, is frequently but too just. In my case, however, there is a material difference. I come to you by the recommendations of my friends, not

so much to *ask* for advice as to request your active interference in my affairs."

"Then your Lordship must on no account interfere with *me*. My character and reputation are at stake with every business I undertake, and I feel a proud satisfaction in the consequence which my name gives to every thing which passes through my hands. It is too late in the day for me to appear a trifler in the eyes of the world. Your affairs, seemingly, have not prospered under your own hands; let us see what success will attend them under mine. But I must be uncontrolled!"

"I am willing you should be so. I have a confidence in your integrity, and a perfect reliance on your judgment."

"Why then, look ye, my Lord.—My advice is summed up in very few words. Instantly get at the knowledge of the real state of your affairs, and leave nothing whatever to conjecture.

This can only be accomplished by calling in your debts. You must dispose of your town establishment with all possible expedition; and, let the cost be what it will, you must again be free and unincumbered. This, it appears from your statement, may be done without much difficulty."

My pride caught the alarm at these public proceedings, although I could not dispute their propriety. Every one feels an apprehension that what passes in his private thoughts is known to the whole world. The effect of an advertisement, I thought, would be to announce my folly and weakness, and would convey the idea that my situation was much worse than was really the case. But my word had just been pledged to Mr. Nalder, to abide by his decision. To object therefore, would be to expose myself to a charge of irresolution. After some little hesitation I consented.

"I must now have your lordship's written authority to act as I may deem most conducive to your lordship's welfare."

My recent sufferings from a breach of confidence induced me to pause at this demand. I attempted to evade it, by saying that I did not apprehend such a thing would be necessary, as I could always be referred to for the purpose of affording my sanction to whatever arrangements he recommended. But Mr. Nalder declared it impossible for him to act without such a document. "Besides," he added, "it is more a matter of satisfaction to myself. It may be recalled at any time."

I agreed to this also, but hinted that I thought nothing further would now be wanting. However, I was mistaken, for I found, that to have a lawyer in your confidence was to be in his power, and the first step to his obtaining that

power, was the possession of the title-deeds, papers, and secrets of his clients.

The records of my mother's family, from the earliest periods, were dispatched to Lincoln's Inn, as soon as I returned to London. Mr. Bearblock, my surviving trustee, between whom and Mr. Nalder there was something of an ancient grudge, was also called upon by my new lawyer. He denied being in possession of any papers, and pleaded his full and entire discharge, under my own hand. A bill in Chancery was then filed against him, calling upon him to make certain discoveries, and to render a complete statement of accounts. Thus, although the payment of present debts, and the arrangement for the future were the only points professedly under consideration, I found myself dragged into an inexplicable labyrinth regarding the past.

The next step was of a most galling

nature. It was a public advertisement, desiring the creditors of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Winterbourne, to send the amount of their respective demands to Charles Nalder, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, in order to their being immediately adjusted and discharged.

This, as I expected, brought me innumerable letters of condolence from my quondam acquaintance, "sorry to hear of my present situation." The Marquis of Bumblefoot always knew what a rogue I had to deal with, and wisely foresaw what the end would be, but did not think I had been done so neatly. Lord George Saville, a professed gamester, lamented that I had not placed myself under his tuition, he would have guarded me against foul play,—all foul play, I suppose, but his own. My friend, the Earl of Cullymore, expressed his sincere sorrow for what had happened to me, and

kindly told me, that in about a year, or a year and a half, he should be able to *lend* me a little money—what I had lent *him* had escaped his memory. I had one comfort, at least, in my distresses, if they can in reality be so called: my late associates had no further hopes of obtaining any thing from me. They permitted me to act as I pleased without personal molestation. Few of the self-dubbed fashionables were in town, and those few had but little ambition to connect themselves with a man who was represented by fame as ruined past redemption. Thus what I contemplated as an imaginary evil, turned out a most positive good.

My father's creditors pressed round about me, to know whether my debts were to be paid by cutting off the entail of part of the Erpingham estates. In that case they looked for their share in the spoil. When I assured them that I had not the most distant idea of

such a thing, they shrugged up their shoulders and left me. One of them I civilly kicked down stairs for daring to tell me that I was little better than my father. I caught fire too soon, or I should otherwise have liked to have known the exact degree of comparison in which I should have been placed. The same evening, I was taken by a warrant to Bow Street, and found bail for the assault. But as I never heard any more of the business, I suppose my friend imagined that the kicks were an ample compensation for my share of the debt.

My own wine-merchant, in a fright, on being told that I had not the most distant intention of raising money in conjunction with my father, offered to take the remainder of my stock of wines off my hands, at the same rate he had at first charged it. I should willingly have complied with his offer, but on further conversation, it was to

be clogged with a sale upon the premises, of "Lord Viscount Winterbourne's stock of wines." In the general alarm among my creditors, occasioned by the conviction of my being completely *done up*, I verily believe that they would eagerly have seized a composition of five shillings in the pound.

I must do Nalder the justice to say, that in the settlement of the tradesmen's accounts, he was of the most eminent service to me. In this business, the letter from Messrs. Perchpole to Villiers proved of essential importance. These worthy gentlemen chose to deduct the thirty per cent from the whole amount of their bill, rather than leave the case to the settlement of a London jury. Nalder played off the same artillery to the upholsterer, the amount of whose demand I am ashamed to mention. Nalder charged him with an agreement to allow Villiers thirty per

cent.; of this he alleged he could furnish ample proof. The terror of Mr. Drapery proved the charge to be well-founded. He quietly submitted to the deduction, and, I am satisfied, was still an immense gainer.

After much discussion, the wine-merchant chose to accept the payment of his demand, with an allowance of twenty per cent, under the shape of a discount for prompt payment. His usual credit to the nobility being, he said, two years.

When all the demands upon me were satisfied, my funded property was completely exhausted. The balance in my banker's hands was but a trifle; and, with the exception of that trifle, which was wholly inadequate to my wants on the most moderate scale, I was without the means of procuring cash in a regular way for five months to come.

The sale of my house in London

would have afforded an ample supply, and I was anxious to take the advice of Mr. Drapery, and to dispose of it with the furniture as it stood. But at this season of the year, it was doubtful when a purchaser could be found, and in the interim I should be penny-less. To have borrowed, in case I met with any person inclined to lend, would have been degrading to me. I therefore resolved upon the immediate sale of my furniture and effects, in Grosvenor Square, by auction. The wines I had intended should be removed to Bingwood; but, upon the suggestion of Mr. Smirke, the auctioneer, who was, I imagine, loth to lose any part of his commission, I agreed to reserve only such parts as did not reach a full value at the sale. The house was to be sold as soon as possible; thus closing for ever the scene of my early follies. My short career of grandeur and magnificence

had nothing brilliant to make it palateable to the recollection. It was entered upon without thought, and put an end to without regret, at least for its own sake. It was attended with no other effect than that of consuming an immense sum of money, and teaching me to despise myself.

My property, I was told, sold uncommonly well; the sale producing very nearly one third, not of what the things were charged by the respective tradesmen, but of what they had actually cost me. However it afforded ready cash, and I was half inclined to think myself fortunate in saving even that pittance from the wreck of my personal fortune.

In the firm determination of making the best of a bad business, I retraced my steps to Bingwood, with the intention of arranging my affairs there, and of then seeking amusement in a continual change of scene. The world, I

thought, was wide enough, and I thought it would be hard if I should be the only person who could not find pleasure in some part of it or other. I felt myself incapable of remaining at home without society, and the society to which I had been hitherto accustomed had become thoroughly hateful to me.

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## CHAP. XIV.

### *DESTINY.*

THE person who sits down for the purpose of relating to the world the occurrences of his life, and who has commenced his career of authorship by such relation, is apt to consider that his task is easy;—that he has nothing more to do than to describe events which are treasured up in his memory, or which force themselves upon his recollection; and to paint those sensations which always accompany the recalling of past scenes.

A few pages convince him of the er-

roneous opinion he has entertained, and point out to him the impossibility of conveying to the reader, by the pen of maturity, those feelings and ideas which arose spontaneously in the mind during the first effervescence of youthful passions. The writer, weary of the world, sick of its follies, and shocked at its vices, views the active pursuits of life through a false medium. The conduct which he now condemns he formerly practised, and is yet unwilling to confess it; while self-love induces him, unintentionally, to find excuses for such parts of his former actions as appear *discordant with sober reflection.*

It was my intention to have given a faithful account of my progress through life; but on looking back upon what I have already written, how many glaring instances of folly are unnoticed, and yet there are sufficient to stamp me a fool;—how many marks of vice are un-

mentioned, and yet there are sufficient to prove the absence of virtuous principles. I feel myself incapable of depicting, with the proper warmth of colouring, the rise and advancement of those operations of the mind, which, although they serve to bias the future cast of character, and are perfectly consonant with the levity and inexperience natural to an early entrance into life, are wholly unworthy the regard of those who are fast verging towards the grave. I can call to mind most of the effects, but the causes are beyond me.

Shakespeare has divided the usual period allotted to man's existence into seven ages. But *he* drew from the general mass, and not from particular species. The life of an individual, whom fortune has placed in the higher ranks of society, may commonly be reduced to three;—the age of expectation, the age of enjoyment, and the age

of satiety. The space of time which each occupies is variable as the winds, nor is the order more strictly observed. But be the pursuit ambition or pleasure, business or idleness, the division is still the same. Early wisdom is frequently closed with mature folly; and in some rare instances, the age of enjoyment has left little or nothing of room for the other two. My life has been passed chiefly under the influence of the first or the last, leaving scarcely any space for the middle age.

Such, however, is the proneness of man to endeavour to gain the good opinion of himself, that let his years be what they may, he is anxious to palliate those things which his heart secretly disapproves. He is apt to view the world as the connoisseur views a picture, in which shades are requisite to give effect to light, and where defects often tend to the developement of beauties. The necessity of contrast is

but too obvious. Turbulence would not be called patriotism if *real* patriotism existed ;—without virtue, vice would be stripped of its deformity; and without vice, virtue would lose half its charms.

The spendthrift considers, "that old families, like old besoms, will wear down to the stumps and finally fret out," and that it would be useless to set himself in opposition to fate. He may also reason patriotically, that unless old families contrived within themselves the means of moving off the hinges, new families would be unable to find room to display themselves. If he thinks at all, he would perhaps consider, as an excuse for his extravagance, that it is the dissipation of one part of the kingdom that affords an opportunity to the other to aggrandize itself. He may therefore say, that he acts from principle. As a nation, our prosperity, if not occasioned, is at least

upheld by those grand stimuli to industry, the possession of wealth and honours. The wasteful expenditure of the nobility then, may find advocates among themselves. Sophistry will call it a national good, as affording the means of conferring property on those who know how to take care of it; and, at all events, the money of the spendthrift cannot get into worse hands, but must, in every case, move into the possession of those more likely to circulate it to the general advantage. The loss is to the individual, who parts with what he does not want, and is unable to enjoy;—the gain is to the country at large, which is sure to benefit by the change.

I am far from being the only one who has resorted to this species of reasoning. The expenditure of a considerable fortune had procured me no rational enjoyment, nor had my recollection any single action to dwell upon

with pleasure. I have endeavoured to comfort myself that I had been cheated of the greater part, and that I was in reality, more unfortunate than culpable. But here I deceived myself. Misfortune, I found, in my own case, was only another name for imprudence; and I believe it to be the same in most other cases. Whilst one part of mankind laughed at my egregious folly, another lamented my weakness and ignorance, and a third scoffed at my vices. But the most acute of all my mental sufferings arose from those kind friends, who chose to express their pity for me, especially for having been the dupe of a designing scoundrel.

I was not permitted to chew the hard crust of disappointment and vexation in silence. But that I might be quite certain as to the character of my former associate, supposing that I could possibly still entertain the smallest doubt on that head, I hardly met a person to

whom custom had authorized the freedom of addressing me, who had not some information to give me relative to my former *bosom friend*, particularly those who were anxious to supply his place in my establishment.—"It was strange," I was frequently told, "that a man of my sense should be so blindly infatuated, in a matter that was apparent to the most superficial observer." This expression was usually followed by a proffer of services, and a tender of sincere regard. But I was now thoroughly convinced that I was not a man of sense, and I began to entertain but a mean opinion of the good sense and common honesty of those, who chose again to promulgate such a discovery in my hearing. At all events, I had the sense to perceive that I had acted like a fool, and the confidence in my own judgment, to determine from that time forward to see with my own eyes, hear with my own ears, and act

from my own impulse, however much my faculties chose subsequently to mislead me.

I regulated my affairs at Bingwood as far as I was capable of doing. I discharged all useless hands and useless heads, and reduced my establishment to a complete bachelor's scale. I promoted Giles to the double office of head groom and *valet de chambre.* My *French* gentleman I had parted with in London, and I no longer needed a house steward to regulate accounts, which were perfectly within the scope of my old house-keeper. I retained no more horses than I actually wanted. These compared with the total number of my stud, were, few indeed. The rest were sent to the hammer, and I had again to learn the difference between buying and selling.

My stay at Bingwood was short. To enjoy the sports of the field, or indeed any other pleasureable occupa-

tion, it is necessary that every one should carry at least one half of his amusement with him. This was far from being my case. The scenes which might have charmed me in early years, were no longer capable of yielding that zest with which I had formerly viewed them, " when hope was kind and friendship seemed sincere." I cannot finish the verse as applicable to my own case, for instead of purchasing " sorrow with a tear," I had bought it for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. To say the truth, I was too much out of humour with myself and every thing about me, to derive pleasure in any situation, but particularly in one where every object only served to remind me of what I now was, and what I had been.

My mind was soon made up to leave Bingwood, in search of that, which Bingwood could not produce.

But in the pursuit of happiness it is not easy, when all places are alike, to fix on one most likely to afford it. Following the practice of a knight errant of yore, I suffered myself in my peregrinations to be directed by chànce. I had no fixed object, but to get rid of myself;—no settled pursuit but to divert my mind from dwelling upon evils which were irremediable. The whole world was before me, and preference I had none. Had a native of North Britain been similarly circumstanced, he would infallibly have directed his steps southwards, and that without a moment's hesitation, in case he had not passed the latitude of London. A valetudinarian would have been guided by the weather-cock, and if inclined to hypochondriacism would have constantly left the Eastern blast in his rear. But the north pole had not that repelling effect upon my constitution,

that it has upon the loosened Scot, and my health was too good to allow me to give way to vapours.

In this dilemma of uncertainty and indecision, I remember waiting with the hind wheels of my phaeton between the lodge gates, my two grooms being patiently stationed in the rear. Chance or fate saved me the trouble of deciding. The situation of Rome was settled by a flight of six vultures. But my destiny was concluded upon in a more humble way, by the bite of a forest fly upon one of the horses rumps. Being full blood, high fed, and little worked, for they had been in a state of quiescence during my late London excursion, my cattle had got a little above themselves, and beyond my controul; and although quadrupeds may not be so tender in an attack upon the seat of honour as bipeds, they would be equally apt to start at the piercing proboscis of these travelling freebooters.

The horse made a plunge, and I suppose communicated to his companion the insult he had received, and claimed his sympathy, for they both set off at full speed, to the no small hazard of my neck. The roads were luckily good, wide, and free from interruption, and I managed to arrest their progress at the expiration of about the third mile. I then awaited the arrival of Giles, and the other groom, but before they came up I discovered, that unknown to myself, my serious intention had been to proceed to Bath. Probably this determination was started in my mind, by the horses, without asking my consent, having thought proper to take an opposite direction.

I thought I should look like a simpleton if I was seen to measure my steps back again, and therefore, finally decided in favour of Harrowgate; at

which place, on the forenoon of the second day, according to my banker's phrase, "I safely arrived in due course."

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## CHAP. XV.

*L'ENTRE SOL.*

ON my arrival at Harrowgate, I drove up to the inn which made the most substantial appearance, and, as I alighted, expressed my intention of remaining a few days. The customs here were such as I had never before met with. The jumbling together of visitors of all descriptions was wholly new to me. Peers and periwig makers, peeresses and mantua makers; the wives of baronets, and the wives of butchers were all amalgamated in one shapeless mass. Two hotels, or rather

boarding houses, for they partook more of the latter denomination than the former, composed the extent of the accommodations which the place afforded, and the inmates of each satisfied the cravings of the appetite at a public table. In my days of false pride and empty consequence, I should have considered my remaining in such a situation as a degradation to nobility, and should instantly have left the place, without paying any regard to my tired horses, in case I could not have experienced the style of accommodation to which I had been regularly accustomed. But my plan was now to amuse my mind at any rate, and after the pillage I had undergone, I did not feel the less inclination to join the general assemblage, when I was given to understand that my expences would be reduced below that on which I had previously supposed it possible that any human being could exist.

But if all noblemen knew the value of money, my remarks in the last chapter would be wasted.

I took possession of my sleeping apartment, which had just been quitted by a London cheesemonger, and with some difficulty obtained the exclusive use of a sitting room; for which, by the bye, I found that I had no occasion. A sitting room was a *sine qua non* of my remaining at the hotel, and as I suppose they did not wish to lose me, a Mr. Solomons, they told me, had yielded up his apartment for my accommodation.

At the ringing of the first dinner bell, I entered the drawing room, at one end of which were seated three ladies, who appeared to have long passed the bloom of youth. These ladies I afterwards found were Mrs. Dunder, the widow of the late Dean of ——, fine, fat and fubsy; and the Misses Cornelia and Euphemia Side-

bottom, two spinsters of moderate fortune, whose usual place of residence was in the neighbourhood of Skipton in Craven, but who usually, as well as Mrs. Dunder devoted some few months of the year in an excursion to some of the fashionable watering places.

The ladies rose from their seats, which I supposed was the usual compliment to a stranger, but they soon resumed them. In return I made one of my most graceful bows. The conversation, which my entering the room had suspended for a moment, was now resumed, without my being any further noticed. This I must own, a little nettled me, as I had not only made one of my best bows, but had also settled my mouth to a most agreeable smile. This it appears was the usual fate of commoners, who were left to struggle into notoriety as they could. On consideration I thought it highly reasonable, seeing that the only way

in which a person can enlarge the circle of his acquaintance is to render himself pleasing, and to adopt a style of manners suitable to the individual whom he is desirous of cultivating. The most formidable engine is flattery, which when well applied is infallible. Now as every person at first entrance into a boarding house is called upon to render homage to the old stagers, it is but fair they should be tickled in their turn, by those who are entering upon their noviciate.

In my case, the apparent neglect was entirely owing to their not being informed that I was a sprig of nobility. The appellation of "my Lord," from the mouth of Giles, who at dinner stood behind my chair in a superb livery, the remnant of my former folly, appeared to have a wondrous effect upon the whole party, and upon the three ladies I have already mentioned, in particular. From that

moment my plate was crowded with tit bits. From one end of the table to the other, it was, "pray, my Lord, allow me to help you to this."—"Do me the honour, my Lord, to taste this upon my judgment, I can assure your Lordship it is excellent."—"Shall I have the pleasure of drinking a glass of wine with your Lordship, &c. &c. &c." From that time I was loaded with civilities. Constant enquiries, were made as to how I passed the night, and some of the party even went so far as pay their personal respects to Traveller my Danish dog, who generally held his court in the stable, but who by special invitation sometimes entered the sitting room, where he was an object of universal admiration, and was allowed to be the most beautiful dog that ever was seen. Giles —— But in the order of my story I have not yet got out of the drawing room.

Being left to my own discretion, I seated myself in one of the windows in expectation of seeing something that was capable of affording amusement. Several odd looking personages approached towards the door of our hotel, having among them some of the most disgusting objects I ever beheld. These, I was informed, were just under the influence of the water, which had successfully operated in clearing away the impurities from the rest of the company. This was enough, and I made up my mind to bid farewell to Harrowgate as soon as possible.

Miss Euphemia Sidebottom at last directed the general attention to the group below us by exclaiming, "Well, dear me, here is Doctor Bubbleby at last. I declare I shall so abuse him for leaving us. But he is such a delightful companion that I do not won-

der at Mrs. Bubbleby detaining him as long as she can."

"Indeed, Miss Sidebottom," said Mrs. Dunder, addressing herself to the eldest of these four spinsters, "I think Mrs. Bubbleby would have good reasons for detaining the doctor if she knew the danger she runs from your sister's partiality."

"Well," added Euphemia, "I say and say again that the doctor is one of the most delightful men in the world."

"There, sister, I fully agree with you," said Cornelia, "and I do not see that at our time of life ——"

"Our time of life!" roared out Euphemia, "I wish sister you knew how to conduct yourself. Our time of life indeed! If I was as old as some people there might ——"

"Why, lord! sister," retorted Cornelia, "you know there is only——

Miss Euphemia's colour was mount-

ing in her cheeks, and I began to be apprehensive lest Miss Cornelia's head dress should suffer in an attack which was certainly projected, and put into a train for execution, when Mrs. Dunder arrested the further progress of this unhappy dispute by saying, "But, my dear *Miss* Euphemia," laying a strong emphasis upon the word *Miss*, which might be construed in two ways, "pray recollect that Mrs. Bubbleby is not dead yet, and that, according to the doctor's account, she is not even ailing."

This little *fracas* was finally terminated in a drawn battle by the entrance of the hero himself, accompanied by the party I had observed from the window. On the mention of a name we are apt to draw a portrait in the imagination of the person bearing it. To certain sounds, the mind, we know not why, insensibly attaches certain ideas. The name of Bubbleby was

associated in my fancy with a personage of vast bulk and bloated features, to which a bushy well powdered wig had been added together with the appellation of doctor. On one point however I was at a loss, for not knowing whether he was a doctor of law, physic, or divinity, I could not put a gold headed cane in his hand till I was assured that he was a follower of Galen and Hippocrates, in which capacity I was more than half inclined to consider him.

My surprise was proportioned to the extent of the difference between the original, and the picture I had drawn. Doctor Bubbleby was below the lowest military standard, and had more the appearance of being the shadow than the substance of a man. As nature had not departed from her regular plan, and had not distinguished the doctor from the rest of frail mortality, by the gift of perpetual youth, she had

exerted herself to make him amends, in some degree, by gracing his features with a perpetual smile. The doctor appeared pleased with himself, and with all the world. He was seemingly between forty-five and fifty years of age, perhaps more inclining to the latter. He had sharp lively features and his grey hair curling over a high forehead gave him an air of dignity notwithstanding his diminutive size. He was altogether a man of rather prepossessing appearance at first sight.

The doctor, with a half bow and a smile to every one as he passed by, made his way to Mrs. Dunder and the Miss Sidebottoms, who welcomed his return with warm congratulations on his looks, and tender enquiries after the Bubbleby family.

"A thousand thanks, my dear, dear ladies," answered the Doctor, "for your kind and affectionate solicitude. But you are as good and as handsome as

ever. How does my dear Mrs. Dunder find himself."

"Oh lord, doctor," said the dame, "I am neither good nor handsome. It is time for us old women to lay by."

The Miss Sidebottoms bit their lips and frowned.

"Ah! my dear madam," observed the Doctor, as he squeesed the matron's hand, "how you love to joke. But the only weakness I ever could discover in the character of Mrs. Dunder, is her not putting a sufficient estimation upon her worthy self."

Mrs. Dunder drew up her chest, returned the doctor's smile, looked round the room, and at last suffered her eyes to rest upon the two spinsters.

The conversation now became general. The several occupations of the morning formed ample topics of discourse. The doctor had something to say to every one, tending to promote

the general good humour. He rejoiced at every one's pleasures and partook of every one's pains,—regretted their little disappointments and shared their satisfaction. I was not omitted in the general crowd, for the doctor observing that I belonged to nobody, addressed me on a subject interesting to every body, and told me that it had been a remarkable fine day for the season of the year, but that the morning had been uncommonly cold.

I directed my attention to the other characters, but as they were not calculated to excite any extraordinary interest in my mind, and did not shew any striking peculiarities, I shall pass them over for the present, with the exception of a lady of the name of Berrington and her two daughters. They had visited Harrowgate for the health of the youngest daughter, and their arrival preceded mine about a week. They were the only persons in the group

with whom I entertained the least desire of further intercourse.

As I subsequently so far forgot nobility as to fall desperately in love with the eldest Miss Berrington, it may be expected that I should say something respecting her, either here or elsewhere. But I shall cautiously abstain from all personal description in her case, having been led to believe that glowing pictures of female charms are neither expected nor tolerated. To speak of the beauty of Lydia Berrington without rapture, and to indulge in rapture without yielding to an enthusiastic ardour, is more than I can accomplish. I will therefore be silent. To me she was every thing that was amiable and lovely, and although upwards of forty years have passed over my head, since my first meeting with her, and as many since I last saw her, I still fondly cherish the tender recollection of the

only being to whom I was ever seriously attached.

The figure depicted in my mind's eye, even at this distance of time, is one of perfect beauty. In the delineation of what the heart alone can feel how much must the tongue or the pen fall short. Besides, I have another reason for keeping clear of minutiæ,—I am anxious that the world should admire her as I have done. If I describe features and complexion, let them be what they will, I shall only please a few, and be ridiculed by the remainder for my want of taste. The black headed descendant of the torrid zone will wonder how any female can claim pretesions to beauty, whose hair is not of those delightful glowing tints which approach to redness; and on the other hand the fair haired inhabitants of the temperate and frozen regions will express an equal admiration of black locks and dark complexions. Now

as Lydia Berrington was unlike every other woman chance has thrown in my way, by describing her I shall infallibly offend the fairest parts of nature's works, who as they are apt to estimate the standard of beauty by their own charms, independent of being angry, would accuse me of a want of discernment in attributing perfection to qualites and qualifications they do not themselves possess.

It may be urged against me, that having said she was like no other woman, I could offend none by the portraiture. This is wrong. The Venus de Medici is the allowed perfection of the female form; but, every female can find something which she considers to constitute resemblance. A piece of sculpture can only give an idea of form and feature. I may describe Lydia Barrington in the same manner and few will be found to quarrel with the drawing, provided that it be done

in Indian ink or chalks, but if I call in the assistance of Beechey or Lawrence and paint her in oils,—if I add to the picture, that calm benignity which gave the features their peculiar expression: if———. But beauty after all is so much the child of fancy, and Cupid so completely blinds the eyes of his victims, that they are apt to mistake the amiable qualities of the mind for personal charms, or perhaps, like Queen Titania with Bottom the weaver, become "spell bound."

END OF VOL. I.

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